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RECOLLECTIONS OF A RUSSIAN DIPLOMAT

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of a
RUSSIAN
DIPLOMAT

By
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Foreign Affairs 1901-1910
and later, Minister
Plenipotentiary
in Bulgaria*

WITH 36 ILLUSTRATIONS

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This volume is dedicated to
the Memory of
H.I.H. THE GRAND DUCHESS VLADIMIR

THE year I entered the Ministry for Foreign Affairs I had the honour of being presented to Their Imperial Highnesses the Grand Duke and the Grand Duchess Vladimir. All those who have had the privilege of meeting Their Imperial Highnesses remember the culture of the Grand Duke, the interest he devoted to all historical, political, and diplomatic questions, as well as the charm and intelligence of the Grand Duchess.

I always recall with emotion and gratitude the kindness with which Their Imperial Highnesses received me, and which has never failed me since. The Grand Duke was greatly interested in my activities, and the Grand Duchess followed the consecutive stages of my career with sympathy.

Having become a widow, the Grand Duchess retired from public life, and at the outbreak of the war devoted herself entirely to the organization of helping the wounded. Tired and overworked, she decided in February, 1917, to rest for a few weeks in the Caucasus, and it was there that she first experienced the Revolution. She was arrested and kept in her villa by armed and undisciplined soldiers. I hastened to join her there, and did not leave her until the moment of her death.

During our exile she constantly encouraged me to write down all I had heard and seen during my eventful career. To her influence, to her gracious and kind encouragement, this book owes its appearance.

Piously I evoke the image of this Great Lady (in the true sense of the word), and to her memory I respectfully dedicate my volume.

A. S.

PREFACE

MEMOIRS and souvenirs of late years have appeared constantly. These coming from diplomats and statesmen of many countries are of interest, not only to our contemporaries, but they are intended to serve in future to reconstruct history and explain the origin of the troubled and agitated epoch through which the whole world is actually passing.

The more of such documents then that appear, the better for posterity ; that at least is my opinion.

In comparing the notes of the various eye-witnesses of these events which have disturbed and are still disturbing the world, truth so dear to historians is bound to come to light.

My career has brought me in touch with many important historical events. Primarily, in my position as Chief of the Cabinet of the Minister for Foreign Affairs. This post I held from 1901 to 1910—under three ministers. I assisted at a series of interviews between the Emperor Nicholas II and various sovereigns and heads of states.

In this way I was initiated into many transactions *then* considered of a strictly private nature quite unknown, not only to the public at large but even to certain political sections of the Ministry.

At the same time, I was guardian of the most secret Ministerial archives, many of which unhappily have since fallen into Bolshevik hands and have been divulged by them anyhow, regardless of truth only and in a fashion to suit their own purpose.

Later my career carried me abroad, where I took a very active part in a political drama which so far has never been given an authorized or competent explanation either in

PREFACE

Russia or to the public at large : I allude to the abnormal and disastrous rupture which took place in 1915 between Bulgaria and her "Liberator."

Having published "orange" books on the rupture between Austria, Germany, and Turkey, ruptures which were much more comprehensible to all, the Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs published nothing concerning the rupture with Bulgaria.

It is for that reason, therefore, that after a long and painful hesitation, I determine to relate the events as they actually took place.

Those, it is true, are of recent date, but they already belong to history.

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RECOLLECTIONS OF A RUSSIAN DIPLOMAT

1899-1900

ENTERING the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in 1892, I spent seven years as secretary in various grades. In 1899 I was chosen to accompany the then Minister, Count Lamsdorff, on an official trip.

My chief had been summoned by the Emperor Nicholas who was spending the autumn with his family in the Livadia Palace in the Crimea. The Crimea is one of the most picturesque corners of the former Empire of the Czars. The southern coast especially is celebrated for its beauty and mild climate. A splendid road—a masterpiece of engineering work—built in the middle of XIXth century (when the Crimea was administrated by Count Worontzoff), runs at a considerable height along the coast of the Black Sea, revealing a magnificent view at every turning. The railway line did not go then beyond Sebastopol and Simferopol; the numerous travellers who fled from the chilly climate of St. Petersburg and the interminable frosts of Moscow, to seek the sun of the national “Riviera,” were obliged to pursue their way in a carriage between the above-mentioned towns and the southern sea-coast. At the end of the last century horse-vehicles served for that purpose, but were replaced by motor-cars later on. The distance one had to cover was about a hundred kilometres. The road became really beautiful when the traveller reached the “Corniche,” passing through an enormous gateway in an opening of the

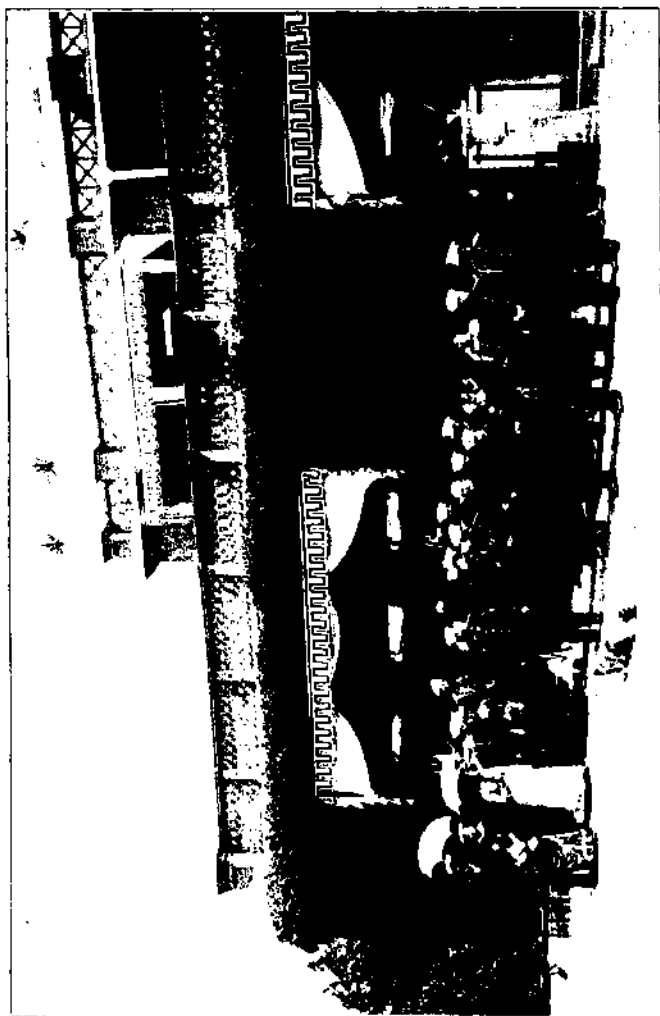
rock bearing the Tartar name of "Baydary." A magic view unrolled itself suddenly before the spectator's delighted gaze, embracing the blue immensity of the Black Sea, with its picturesque coast stretching as far as the eye can see.

Yalta is the principal town on this coast, and quite near it, at some five miles, lies Livadia, a splendid estate that had once belonged to a Polish magnate, the Count Potocki, and was bought later on by the Emperor Alexander II. Livadia became the Czar's favourite residence; he came to rest there in spring, after the fatigues of the winter; oftener still, he arrived in autumn, which—with its warm and fragrant nights, and its golden vines—is, perhaps, the most delightful season in the Crimea.

Alexander III, son of the Emperor Alexander II, inherited his father's love for this charming residence, and came almost every year to the Crimea. He enjoyed the simple life he led at Livadia, surrounded by his family, far from the official throng of the capital. This monarch's strength of character and even his splendid physical constitution seemed to personify the beautiful and powerful country over which he ruled. He disliked, however, the pomp of his vast palaces, preferring a more modest abode. Thus, while possessing in St. Petersburg the most beautiful palaces of the world, he usually lived in his smaller residence of Anitchkoff. His favourite abode in the neighbourhood of St. Petersburg was the Castle of Gatchina, and even there he occupied the smallest apartments, preferring them to the State-rooms.

There were two palaces at Livadia in the days of his reign, but neither of them was sumptuous. He lived in the smaller of the two, and it was there he died in 1894, after a long and painful illness which carried him away in the flower of his age and while still in full vigour.

Amongst those who watched by the bedside of the dying Czar was, of course, the future Emperor Nicholas II, and it was on his death-bed that Alexander III blessed his son's union with the Princess Alix of Hesse. Married several weeks later, the young Czar Nicholas and the Empress



LIVADIA, CRIMEA: THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER III WITH HIS SUTLE

Alexandra returned the following spring to Livadia, which, since then, became their constant and favourite residence.

Thus it was that when the Court was spending the autumn of 1899 in the Crimea, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Lamsdorff, was summoned by the Emperor to Livadia.

Accompanying the Minister as Political Director was Mr. Hartwig, who later terminated his career as Minister at Belgrade.

While holding this post he did not hide his antipathy to Austria. His dislike was so openly manifested, that public opinion accused him (wrongly) of having celebrated the death of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, by holding a demonstrative reunion at the Imperial Legation. To explain matters, he called one evening on his colleague the Baron Giesel just as the latter had returned from the Archduke's funeral.

It was during that visit that he fell dead from a stroke of apoplexy.

This sudden death gave rise to another improbable rumour : that he had been poisoned by Austrian cigarettes.

My post at that time was that of chief of the Cabinet, and as secretary we had Mr. C. Nabokoff, who at the outbreak of the last revolution held the post of Councillor at the Russian Embassy in London.

Our stay in the Crimea had been fixed for six weeks or a couple of months, but the Emperor having caught typhoid fever, we remained on until January 1, 1900.

The Boxer Movement in China was then at its height. The Foreign Legations at Peking were besieged by the rebels. Their code wires with Europe were tampered with *en route*, so as to render them, if not incomprehensible, at least difficult to decipher.

Our little office was kept busy, having to send out not only political news but also protocol and current affairs.

Twice weekly we sent couriers to and received from St. Petersburg, who carried on the service between the Minister and the Central Administration.

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During that autumn several foreign missions arrived to salute the Emperor.

A religious mission from Thibet, with the Lama Agvan Dordgieff at its head, arrived at Yalta to intercede with the Emperor for the spiritual needs of Thibet, and, according to long-established custom, when the Emperor arrived on the shores of the Black Sea the Sultan sent a special embassy to offer his greetings.

On this occasion it was Tourkhan Pasha (later Ambassador at St. Petersburg), who was entrusted with this mission. His arrival was preceded by that of our Ambassador at Constantinople, Mr. Zinovieff.

A gala dinner was arranged, the first Court dinner at which I had assisted.

As the Emperor intended making a prolonged stay in the South, his ministers came in turn to Yalta (a charming town at 5 kilometres from the Imperial Residency), to report to His Majesty, who while enjoying a rest continued to keep in touch with the affairs of State. Mr. Witte, Finance Minister, General Kuropatkin, Minister of War, Mr. Sipiaguine, Minister of the Interior, and, of course, the Baron Fredericks, Minister of the Imperial Household, were all there, when we learned that His Majesty was ill. A few days later it proved to be typhoid fever, and the illness took a serious turn and threatened to be tedious and long.

The Empress Alexandra Feodorovna was very anxious. Summoning the Baron Fredericks, she asked if, according to the laws of the Empire, there was not authority to establish a Regency, and commanded the Minister to consult with his colleague of the Foreign Affairs on the subject.

The fundamental laws of the Empire, and the special law concerning the Imperial Family, were looked into. According to these acts, in case of the Emperor's illness, the Regency is assumed by a collegial institution, i.e. composed of several persons.

Baron Fredericks reported this fact to the Empress. She had other ideas on the subject, considering the Regency to be her absolute prerogative.

A rather sharp conversation took place between the Sovereign and the Minister which brought to light for the first time the ambitions and unyielding character of the Empress, and the question of the Regency was dropped.

These lines were already written when the Diary of the Emperor Nicholas II was published. From 1890, he wrote his impressions day by day.

In 1894 he was betrothed, and after that date one often meets on the pages of his Diary notes by his fiancée.

One of these refers to the time when the Emperor Alexander III was dying in the Crimea, and is particularly typical. On October 15 (28), or five days before the death of the Czar, the Princess Alix wrote: "Be firm and ask the doctors Leyden or the other to come alone to you every day and tell you how they find him, and exactly what they wish him to do so that you are always the first to know. And if the Dr. has any wishes or needs anything, make him come *direct* to you. Don't let others be put first and you left out. You are Father's dearest son, and must be told all and be asked about everything, show your own mind and don't let others forget *who you are*."

The imperious character of this note is the precursor of that found later in the letters that the Empress wrote to her Imperial husband during the years of the Great War. Her desire to influence his weak character and to interfere in State affairs, which towards the end of his reign assumed sinister proportions, existed, as we see, from the beginning, even before the Emperor Nicholas ascended the throne.

Meanwhile the Emperor's health began to improve, and when he had sufficiently recovered, he told the Minister of Foreign Affairs to present written political reports and to send for his perusal the diplomatic despatches of the Ambassadors and the Ministers.

The Minister was often surprised to have these documents returned with marginal notes and decisions in the fine handwriting of the Empress. Belonging to a family which for generations had been devoted to the dynasty, and himself a faithful servant of his Sovereign, the Minister was touched

by the interest that the Empress seemed to take in the affairs of his department.

He was far from the thought that the time would come when that interest in the affairs of State would assume such disastrous proportions.

Among the ministers then surrounding the Emperor the Minister of Finance was not the one most in favour. At that time Mr. Witte was opposing, with all the determination of which he was capable, a project of the Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovitch, tending to deprive the Minister of Finance of part of his functions, in favour of a new branch which the Grand Duke intended to superintend personally. This new Department was to be named: "The General Administration of Ports and Commercial Navigation."

On the eve of his departure from the Crimea Mr. Witte went to take leave of the Emperor. Meanwhile the Grand Duke's project had been confirmed and a ukase relative to it was being sent by the same train in which the Finance Minister was to travel.

At the farewell audience with Mr. Witte, the Emperor never alluded to the project, and the former left his Sovereign's Cabinet sure of having defeated the plans of the Grand Duke.



THE DANISH COURT AT THE TIME OF KING CHRISTIAN IX

MY first official visit abroad was in 1901. The Emperor had then gone from Copenhagen to Dantzig, where he was to meet the Emperor of Germany. From there, after rejoining the Empress at Kiel, they were going to visit President Loubet.

It was at the end of the summer of 1901 that the Emperor and Empress had gone to Copenhagen. There the old King Christian IX was surrounded by the members of his large family.

I recollect a gala dinner at Fredensborg where there were present: The Emperor Nicholas, the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, the Empress Marie Feodorovna, King Edward and Queen Alexandra, King George of Greece, and no fewer than forty princes and princesses belonging to the family of the Patriarch King.

His stay in Denmark ended, the Emperor embarked on the *Standart* for Hela, the port of Dantzig. There the interview with the Kaiser was to take place.

The Empress left for Kiel on the Danish yacht *Danebrog*. She was to remain with her sister, Princess Henry of Prussia, where the Emperor would join her and they then would proceed together to France. The next morning, to the strains of both National Anthems and the sounds of Artillery salutes, the *Standart* dropped her anchor in the roads of Hela.

A motor-boat flying the Imperial colours approached the yacht. On the bridge stood the Emperor William, wearing the uniform of a Russian Admiral, a telescope, à la Nelson, under his withered left arm and surrounded by a suite of very tall generals.

I saw him then for the first time. Extremely vivacious,

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noisy, gesticulating, laughing, speaking about everything, and addressing himself to everyone; his excitability was astonishing!

Between the meals, which were taken alternately now on the *Standart*, now on the *Hohenzollern*, the chief pastime of the two Emperors consisted in manœuvres and naval reviews.

The different evolutions which the Emperor William wished to demonstrate were carried out with an amazing exactitude. Whole squadrons of torpedo-boats ploughed the waves at full speed while always maintaining between them the required distance. At a given signal all the anchors dropped at the same moment, etc.

The commander of one of the vessels had the misfortune to be a moment late in executing a movement. Immediately a signal flashed from the Imperial yacht commanding his discharge and naming another to replace him. German method and crushing punctuality were very much in evidence all around us.

The interview over, the two yachts separated, and the Emperor William, from the bridge of the *Hohenzollern*, signalled to the Emperor Nicholas: "The Admiral of the Atlantic salutes the Admiral of the Pacific."

The Kaiser intended this signal to bear a deep political significance, insiduously inviting Russia to interest herself in the affairs of the Far East, leaving the Near East to Germany. It was not at once understood by our sailors. When it was finally submitted to the Emperor, His Majesty gave orders to reply: "A pleasant Journey."

The noisy exuberance of the German Emperor got on His Majesty's nerves, and after our departure, when we were all at dinner, he did not attempt to hide his dislike of it.

At Kiel the Emperor joined the Empress, and after a short stay with the Prince and Princess Henry of Prussia, their Majesties went by sea to France. The Minister of Foreign Affairs had preceded their Majesties by rail—wishing before their arrival to get in touch with our Ambassador in

Paris and with certain French statesmen. The two days which the Minister spent in Paris were devoted entirely to interviews with political personages, to visits, and official receptions, etc.

The Radical Cabinet of Mr. Waldeck Rousseau was then in power. Mr. Delcassé was Minister of Foreign Affairs. General André at the War Office, while the Naval Minister was Mr. Camille Pelletan.

The President of the Republic, Mr. Loubet, gave a dinner at the Elysée Palace in honour of the Minister—and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, a lunch at the Quai d'Orsay. The lunch was strictly official, but the Presidential dinner was not at all formal: Mme Loubet was hostess, her son and married daughter were present, also our Ambassador, Prince Urusov, and Mr. Delcassé. The Presidential House then represented by Colonels Chabaud and Lamy, the Protocol in the persons of Messrs. Crozier and Mollar, and the chief of the Presidential Cabinet, Mr. Abel Combarieu. In the afternoon of September 17 we went by special train to Dunkirk, where their Majesties were due to arrive next day. Dinner was served *en route*.

The whole of political France was represented on that train: The Ministers, Presidents of the Chambre and of the Senate, Deputies, Senators, etc.

We reached Dunkirk at 10 p.m. The Minister, Mr. Tatistcheff and I, spent the night in the house of the Belgian Consul. Next morning, already at dawn the whole town was astir. The President embarked on the *Cassini* to go to meet the Imperial yacht. The crossing was very rough, and their Majesties complained of it!

On landing they were entertained to lunch by the Municipality of Dunkirk, and the first toasts were exchanged. After lunch the fisherwomen of the town, according to a time-honoured custom, presented the Empress with a little gold fish as well as with the so-called "*la marée*," which is the result of that day's fishing.

The strains of the Marseillaise and the Russian National Anthem mingled to salute the Imperial train as it left

Dunkirk for Compiègne, where their Majesties intended remaining two or three days.

The stay in the historical palace of Compiègne was a time to be remembered. The French have a special gift of arranging their receptions, and of bringing to life the glories of the past, that seemed to have departed for ever. But now the magnificent palace of the Kings of France, completely abandoned since Napoleon III's time, took on its ancient splendour as if by magic.

Carpets and furniture were brought out from the Paris "Garde-meubles," the national store of ancient and priceless furniture collected from all the Royal palaces, which altogether gave the place the appearance of being inhabited. Everything was arranged with wonderful taste and historical precision.

On the following day after our arrival a gala dinner, at which 120 guests were present, was given in the Apollo Gallery; political, artistic, scientific, literary, and industrial luminaries were represented at this magnificent repast.

Dinner was followed by a wonderful performance in the ancient theatre of the Palace. Edmond Rostand had composed a poem for the occasion, which was recited by Mme Bartet, while Mlle Zambelli performed a marvellous dance. The days were devoted to manœuvres and military exercises. The French gave us a great display of interesting and novel departures in technical detail. The manœuvres took place over a very extensive area, but the arrangements for getting from one place to another were managed so skilfully as to make things easy and comfortable.

The longer journeys were made by rail and the saloon cars were provided with beautifully designed time tables. We took the shorter trips in carriages. Large red carpets were spread at the stopping places leading to the observation post. Plants and flower-beds seemed to spring up as if by magic, while pavilions and kiosks, built *ad hoc*, offered shelter, and luncheons were served in the trains *en route* or in special tents.

Evening always saw us back at Compiègne. On one

occasion the manœuvres were conducted in such a way as to allow the Emperor visiting Rheims Cathedral, where the French Kings used to be crowned, and where is still preserved the marriage contract of King Henry I with Princess Anne of Russia, one of the daughters of the Russian Prince Jaroslav, who reigned in the XIth century.

On entering the Cathedral their Majesties were received by the Cardinal Archbishop, who showed them round. The mayor of the town, a notorious Socialist, greeted the Emperor in the name of the Municipality of Rheims.

The manœuvres came to an end with a magnificent review at Bethény : 130,000 men marched past the Emperor—the picturesque Zouaves and Colonials attracted general admiration.

On that day the French were allowed to post letters with stamps bearing the Czar's head.

Those of the suite who had accompanied the Czar on his previous visit to France in 1896 declared that the crowd was much more enthusiastic then ; not having been there I could not compare notes, but it struck me that there was nothing lacking in cordiality in the hearty cheers of the crowd on this occasion.

Nearly all the time the Emperor was on horseback, the Empress driving behind in a carriage with outriders. Her usual companion on these occasions was Mme Narishkine, Mistress of the Robes. Once only she appeared with President Loubet.

During our stay at the Castle of Compiègne the christening of the little grandson of the Count of Montbello took place. The Count was at that time French Ambassador at St. Petersburg. The Emperor did him the honour of being godfather and gave the little fellow the name of Nicholas.

The Countess of Montbello on that occasion received the Order of St. Catherine, a rare distinction for a foreigner.

There was talk of the Emperor visiting Paris at that time, but it was considered safer to abandon the idea.

When not assisting at the manœuvres, their Majesties did not go far afield, but confined their outings to the vicinity

of the Castle, the beautiful park, and magnificent forest. The latter contains that gem of architecture (unhappily badly restored), the Castle of Pierrefonds, which dates from the time of Louis XIII.

The Imperial visit was brought to a close after the review at Bethény, by a farewell luncheon, when the Emperor expressed the particular pleasure it had given him to review the powerful French Army. This speech and that of President Loubet were commented on at great length by the European Press.

Before entering the train, their Majesties took a gracious farewell of their hosts, and it was rather edifying to see the ardent Socialist ministers gratefully acknowledging the honours conferred on them, their wives outvying each other in respectful curtsies and eagerly anticipating a smile from the Empress.

Our destination was now Kiel.

It was the Emperor's intention to spend the autumn shooting at the Castle of Spala. He wished to meet Prince Henry and by his intermediary to soothe the Kaiser, whose susceptibilities had been rather ruffled on account of the cordiality of the French visit.

The Minister did not accompany the Czar to Spala, but continued his journey to St. Petersburg.

The Court remained in Poland until the end of October, but by November 6 (19) the Emperor was back at Tsarskoe Selo so as to spend the Fête du Régiment with his own Hussars.

It was shortly after that date that the Marquis Ito, late Premier of Japan, arrived at St. Petersburg. At that time he was not in office in Japan, beyond being Member of the Ghenro, a consulting council of the Mikado, nevertheless, this Japanese Bismarck, as he was called, was one of the greatest statesmen of his time.

His influence at Court was boundless, no important decision was taken without his sanction, and although holding no official position, he was the power behind all decisions both in the home affairs of Japan and their dealings with foreign Powers.

At that time, when the Korean question was on the carpet, when the eventuality of war between Japan and Russia was in the air, the trip to Europe taken by the Marquis Ito was an event of considerable diplomatic importance.

The very day of his arrival he called on the Minister of Foreign Affairs, accompanied by Mr. Tsuzuki, then a Member of Parliament and a former assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs in Tokio. In their interview with Count Lamsdorff both statesmen were most emphatic about the necessity for closer relations with Russia, which was also confirmed by the reports of Mr. Isvolsky, who was then Russian Minister at Tokio, and who assured us that the leaning towards Russia was general in Japan and that Ito was by no means alone in his opinion, that the best way for Japan to settle the Korean question was to come to an understanding with us.

The Minister considering the mission of the Marquis to be of grave importance obtained for him a private audience from the Emperor. His Majesty was graciously pleased to confer personally a decoration upon him, and the same evening a reception was given in his honour at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Marquis Ito was old and ugly, but there was so much bright intelligence in his eyes that it redeemed an otherwise very plain face. He only spoke English and even that not fluently.

Towards the end of his stay an agreement was projected between Russia and Japan on the subject of Corea, and had the Emperor acceded to the request of the Minister to sanction the intended agreement, the war of 1904 would most certainly have been avoided. Instead, however, the Marquis was told that the matter was under consideration and a definite reply would be given shortly.

Disappointed, he left St. Petersburg but tarried a few days in Brussels, hoping for the promised reply. Not receiving it, he went to England, where his efforts met with greater success.

In noting these details, however, I must add that I do not think for a moment that the Japanese policy with regard to us was one of absolute sincerity. According to the reports of Mr. Pavloff, then our representative at Seoul, another Japanese statesman, Kinouie, President of the House of Peers, had been sent to Corea at the same time as Marquis Ito to Russia.

His mission was to prove to the Emperor and his Government that in case of need Russia could not be depended on as an ally, and that the only assistance that Corea could count upon would come from Japan. These double dealings are not an unusual characteristic of Oriental diplomacy. Pretending to look for an ally in Russia on the ground of arranging Corean affairs and at the same time putting Corea's back up against that very country !

Mr. Pavloff adds in his Corean reports that the Kinouie Mission was not taken seriously, either by the Emperor or his Government.

THE ties that bound Italy to the Triple Alliance were daily weighing more heavily upon her, and she no longer tried to dissimulate her sympathy for France.

An Italian squadron had come to Toulon, and the two countries were ostensibly attempting to settle their economic and commercial relations without the interference of a mediator. On our side the moment seemed propitious for a Russo-Italian Alliance, especially so as the terms of the contract of the triple allies were on the eve of expiration.

To further this end it was thought well to take advantage of the intended visit of the young King of Italy on the occasion of his accession to the throne. King Victor Emmanuel, who was related to the Imperial family by marriage, made no secret of his sympathy for Russia.

The mission to Rome to arrange the details of this visit had fallen upon me, and my instructions were to hasten the advent of the royal visit in such a manner, that the initiative should appear to come from the King. In March I went to Rome, where I was at once met with an unsurmountable obstacle.

From our Ambassador I learned that there could be no question of the King leaving Italy just then, as he had it on good authority that His Majesty was due to visit the interior of his own kingdom.

This was my report on returning to Russia, and it was to this effect that Mr. Nelidoff had written to our Minister.

Scarcely two months later, the Count Morra di Lavriano, Italian Ambassador at the Imperial Court, announced to the Minister the intention of his royal master to visit St. Petersburg during the summer. This sudden change of

plan seemed at first incomprehensible, but Mr. Nelidoff had the key to the mystery.

It appeared that after my departure from Rome the young King had received an invitation from the German Emperor, to be present at the autumn manœuvres. Victor Emmanuel has a very energetic nature and is decided in his opinions, likes, and dislikes; he was already beginning to resent the dictatorial manner of his magnificent ally, and so wishing to show his complete independence, he decided that the first visit after his accession should be paid to the Emperor of Russia; so on June 30, accompanied by Mr. Prinetti, Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Majesty arrived at Peterhof. Owing to Italian interest in the Adriatic, the Albanese question was the chief topic of the day, and it was at Peterhof that the seeds of our friendship with Italy were sown, and Racconigi in 1909 was the fruit of that visit.

The next royal visitor to Peterhof was the Shah of Persia, Mozzafer-Eddin, during whose visit the principal topics of interest touched on by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Sadrazan were: the Russo-Persian loan and the part allotted to England in Persia, by the Government of Teheran.

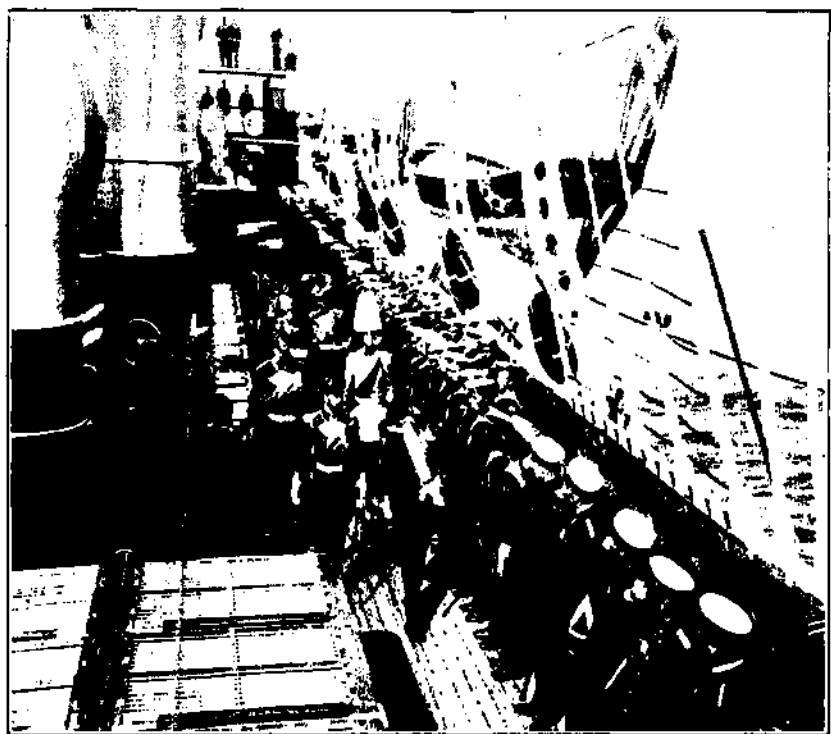
In July the Emperor of Germany was expected at Reval.

On July 22 (O.S.), festday of St. Marie and "nameday" of the Dowager Empress Marie and the Grand Duchess Vladimir, the Minister and I were at Peterhof, and that same evening were due to leave for Cronstadt with the Emperor, and from there to Reval. At 9-30 we were all on board the small Imperial yacht *Alexandria*, when the Emperor drove up with the Empress, who had come to see him off.

On reaching Cronstadt we boarded the *Standart*, and on rising next morning we already sighted Reval, the graceful spires of her Gothic churches delicately outlined against the morning sky.

His Majesty had reserved one day's leisure before the arrival of the Emperor William, in which to visit the town, etc.

The old town of Reval possesses a beautiful cathedral



THE TWO EMPERORS EXAMINING A SHELL-TORN TARGET

THE TWO EMPERORS, ACCOMPANIED BY THE GRAND DUKE ALEXIS, MAKE
A TOUR OF INSPECTION. REVAL, 1902

dating back to the XIIth century. Another interesting edifice is the old palace belonging to the local nobility. The walls of its great hall, where an official reception awaited the Emperor, are ornamented with the coats of arms of the Baltic aristocracy.

In their speeches on that occasion the Baltic barons were most eloquent in their expressions of loyalty and devotion to the Imperial throne.

Amongst the curiosities visited that day were : the little house of Peter the Great and the little Palace of the Empress Catherine I, which are situated at Catherinthal, a suburb of the town.

A dinner was given on board the Imperial yacht in honour of the chief naval officers and members of the Municipality. After dinner, Admiral Makaroff, the inventor of the ice plough, and who only two years later met his death on the ill-fated battleship *Petropavlovsk*, gave us a description, illustrated by cinematograph films, of his voyage to the Polar regions.

The Emperor William arrived on the 24th, and immediately paid a visit to the Czar. During the day we witnessed the naval manœuvres, and in the evening Admiral Rogestvensky, future commander of our fleet during the Japanese War, gave the two Emperors a display of artillery firing at moving targets illuminated by searchlights; also in the morning of the same day their Majesties had witnessed fixed target practice.

The Admiral was highly complimented on the excellence of the display, which earned for him the rare distinction of being named a member of His Majesty's suite.

In the evening the officers of the *Standart* were assembled in the mess-room to be presented with a Cup from the Kaiser, which gift was accompanied by one of his usual noisy and elaborate speeches.

On the 26th, after the regatta, the Emperor William lunched on board the *Standart* and then took leave of the Czar, who accompanied him far out to sea.

Early in the morning of July 27 we once more dropped

anchor at Cronstadt. About 10 a.m. the Dowager Empress and Queen Olga of Greece arrived from Peterhof, to take part in the promised visit of the Emperor on board the *Psara*, a Greek vessel lying in the Cronstadt Roads.

In the autumn the Court returned once more to the Crimea, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs was invited there with his staff, the members of which were the same as in 1899. Arriving in mid-September, we remained, this time at Yalta, until the beginning of December, when, by order of the Emperor, a tour was taken by the Minister through the Balkans.

To explain the origin of this journey, I must retrace my steps.

Difficulties had arisen in Macedonia. The Christian population in that part of the Ottoman Empire, more and more oppressed by the Turks, clamoured loudly to the Great Powers for redress and, in particular, turned their eyes towards Russia.

The traditional arrival of the Turkish Embassy with Tourkhan Pasha again at their head, was taken advantage of to discuss this all-important matter, and at his reception of the envoy of the Sultan the Emperor brought to his notice the pitiable state of the Christian populace in Macedonian towns and warned him of rising ill-feeling, which would easily develop into revolt in a people thus exasperated by Turkish misrule.

The Ambassador assured His Majesty in the name of the Sultan that the matter was already being looked into. His master had already decided to send Edhem Pacha to Macedonia with full powers to smooth the difficulties.

Our Ambassador in Vienna, Count Kapnist, also added his word of warning that unless the legitimate demands of the Christians were satisfied, spring would certainly see an increase of the troubles.

He also suggested that the best way of coming to some satisfactory decision on the matter was the arrival of Count Lamsdorff at Vienna. He could speak to the Emperor Francis Joseph and negotiate personally with Count Golu-

chowski. In his desire to see his project carried out as speedily as possible, Count Kapnist rather exceeded his powers. Through one of his private letters to Count Lamsdorff, we were not a little surprised to learn that Count Goluchowski had already been informed of the plan and that the latter had broached the subject himself to the Emperor Francis Joseph.

Mr. Zinovieff also insisted on the visit of the Minister to Constantinople, saying that it was much easier to settle these matters on the spot than by means of diplomatic negotiations.

Finally, we learned through Mr. Bakhmetief from Sofia that the persecution of the unfortunate Christian population had increased instead of decreasing with the arrival of Edhem Pacha.

The Emperor was exceedingly pained at this information and inquired of the Minister if it were not possible to have recourse to a naval demonstration against Turkey, and to this end His Majesty suggested detaining in the Mediterranean, until the following spring, a sufficiently powerful Russian squadron, which was then making for the Far East. It was under the command of Baron Stackelberg and consisted of 8 ironclads, 11 cruisers, and a considerable number of destroyers.

The Minister disapproved of the suggestion for the following reasons :

"Sire," he said, "if a warship entered the Dardanelles, we would be immediately obliged to occupy the Bosphorus. To do this we would require to be sufficiently strong in the Black Sea. Although we should increase our Mediterranean fleet, England would always be more powerful. On the other hand, it is of greater importance to Russia to have a larger fleet in the Far East.

"The events which are actually taking place in the Balkans are very similar to those of 1876 and complications are to be feared in the near future.

"We cannot be indifferent to the fate of the Slav population whose liberation cost so much Russian blood twenty-five years ago.

" Russian tradition for centuries force her to take part in Balkan affairs and our enemies in the Far East will not fail to profit by it. We must be prepared for this emergency and ready to make our authority felt there.

" Our ally, France, cannot assist us here.

" In fact, shortly before this, when Prince Lobanoff, then Minister of Foreign Affairs and a personal friend of Mr. Hanotaux, had suggested to the latter united action with France in the Far East, he received a very evasive reply.

" On principle, the Minister said, I object to collective demonstrations in these parts. In suggesting them or taking part in them we encourage the entry of warships into the Straits and they are not always easy to get rid of."

The Emperor, seeing the justice of these remarks, said :

" I shall then order the squadron to proceed to the Far East and also see that our Black Sea Fleet is enlarged."

Although disapproving of a naval demonstration, Count Lamsdorff was of opinion that a tour through the Balkans would be very opportune. On his way from Constantinople to Vienna the Minister would be obliged to pass through Sofia and Belgrade, but his stay in these towns under these conditions would be but too natural. On the other hand, we had on the authority of the Archduke Ferdinand, when visiting Russia during the preceding year, and also from the Austrian Ambassador in St. Petersburg, that the old Emperor appreciated any personal attention.

We owed Serbia a little attention, too, not only from political motives, but also on account of having declined the visit to Livadia, which the King Alexander and Queen Draga had proposed making during the preceding year.

Confident in the strength of his argument, the Minister laid his report before the Emperor. It was entirely approved of.

Having reflected on the subject of this journey, His Majesty said : " I shall only feel satisfied if you go yourself to Vienna and to the chief Balkan towns. As to negotiations with the Porte, they could be confided to Mr. Zinovieff. It is not necessary for you to go personally to Constantinople,

especially as the Sultan was in no hurry to receive my Ambassador on his return from the Crimea."

It appeared that eight days had elapsed after Mr. Zinovieff's return to Constantinople before his reception by the Sultan. At the interview all that Abdul Hamid thought fit to say about the Macedonian reforms was extremely vague. The Ambassador left the Palace with the impression that all that the Sultan feared was the event of our coming to terms with Austria on the Balkan question.

"That is exactly the card to play," the Minister remarked to the Emperor, when the question of his journey cropped up again: "The uneasiness which my stay at Vienna, Sofia, and Belgrade will certainly cause may be just the necessary impetus to force the Sultan to take action in Macedonia."

Before the Minister's departure, a complete programme was drawn up. It contained the concessions to be demanded from the Turks in favour of the Slavonic populations of the Balkan Peninsula. The latter, in return for these, were called in the name of the Emperor to submit to the demands of the Russian Government so as to facilitate the task which it had undertaken.

On the eve of his departure, when the Minister presented himself to take leave of the Emperor, the conversation again turned on the possibility of Balkan complications in the spring.

Count Lamsdorff emphasized the necessity of our being of sufficient strength in the Black Sea so that our position in the Far East should not be compromised.

Admiral Alexeieff was Commander of our naval forces there, and the Emperor asked the Minister if he considered the Admiral a capable man.

"For my part," he added, "not only do I think him clever but he seems to me a born statesman; nevertheless he wishes to persuade me that the Japanese fleet is weak, and that in case of necessity we should have no difficulty in disposing of it. Whereas, although admitting that the Japanese army is not on a level with the other armies of

Europe, I am of quite another opinion as to their fleet and I consider we should make a great mistake in underrating its importance. It is an enemy whom at some future date we shall have to take into account."

The Minister replied: "General Kuropatkin is far from considering the Japanese army as a negligible quantity; he says that the soldiers have great staying power, are energetic, and these qualities were very noticeable during the Sino-Japanese war as also during the collaboration of the international units in China."

"Yes, that is true," replied the Emperor, "nevertheless they are not real soldiers and I should not have the slightest fear of my men coming to grips with them."

Two years later, at the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war, General Kuropatkin, then Commander-in-Chief, was of the same opinion as the Emperor. Later, Russia was to suffer for her folly in not having recognized Japan as a redoubtable adversary on land as well as on sea.

On December 6, the Emperor's nameday, we assisted at Mass, and were his guests at the gala luncheon at Livadia, and next day early in the morning we left Yalta on horses, going by Gourzouff Alouchta and Tchatyr-Dag towards Simferopol.

A special train took us on the 9th to the frontier station of Wolotchisk, where an Austrian saloon-car awaited the Minister to take him to Budapest. About eleven o'clock next evening we reached Belgrade, where we only spent the night, as the Serbian Court was then in residence at Nish.

A guard of honour was waiting at the station of Belgrade as also the Staff of the Legation with Mr. Mouravieff-Apostol at its head, and various deputations who took that opportunity of expressing their loyalty and devotion to Russia.

After spending the night at the Legation, we were conveyed by Royal train to Nish. At all the stations along the route crowds assembled to greet the Russian Minister. Patriotic speeches were pronounced, addresses presented. The Senator Gvozditich and the aide-de-camp of King Militch were delegated to attend the Minister.

On approaching Nish, we all donned full uniform, as it was King Alexander's wish that the reception should be as ceremonious as possible.

The chief dignitaries of the Kingdom, both civil and military, in State carriages, formed an escort on the way to the ancient Palace. This residence now occupied by the King had formerly been a Turkish Conac, the house of the Ottoman Governor of the Province.

King Alexander in full dress received us in presence of Colonel Antonitch, Court Marshal. According to Oriental custom, black coffee, sweetmeats of various kinds and cigarettes were served on special trays.

The King, with his low forehead covered with hair and his very awkward manners, made a strange impression. Although he spoke French fluently he seemed altogether very ill at ease. After a short conversation, he suggested that as the Minister was probably tired after the journey he should rest, and he fixed an hour in the afternoon for a longer political interview.

We were then conducted to the apartments of Queen Draga. The Minister and myself were received in turn by Her Majesty, who was in appearance rather plain than pretty, no longer in her first youth and inclined to be stout. She seemed, however, intelligent and was very amiable and chatted pleasantly about the Crimea, Biarritz, and people she had known at St. Petersburg.

The Conac was a simple little wooden house of two stories, and as there was no room for us there, we were lodged in private houses in the town, arranged with furniture brought from Belgrade.

At five o'clock in the afternoon the Minister was received by the King, and the audience lasted until after seven o'clock. They had both endeavoured to see clearly into existing problems and to find a means of relieving a situation that was strained almost to breaking point.

"What do you wish to do? What are your intentions?" the King asked. "Do you think of giving autonomy to Macedonia?"

"No," replied the Minister, "at present that would be going too far—meanwhile we must do what is more urgent. We wish to maintain the *status quo* while introducing a few improvements."

"And what would these improvements be?"

"So far that question is not quite decided. Our Ambassador at Constantinople has orders to draw up, with his Austrian colleague, a plan of reform, the introduction of which would satisfy the most pressing needs of Macedonia. While awaiting the result of their work, I should be grateful if your Majesty would initiate me into his views. Show me the 'desiderata' of Serbia, which I should do my utmost to conciliate with the general plan."

"Well, I shall be frank with you. Here are the points which I find essential:

"1. Get the Albanians out of Macedonia, by offering them advantages and compensations elsewhere. The Sultan Abdul Hamid appreciates their loyalty and devotion. I know that is why the bridges must be made of gold, but they must be got rid of at any cost.

"2. Join Serbian, Bulgarian, and Greek officials to the Turkish in the *villayets* (districts) inhabited respectively by peoples of these nationalities.

"3. If it is not possible to dispense with Turkish soldiers in the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire, they should be enlisted in Asia and not in the European provinces.

"4. Improve the tribunals."

Thus it was that during the Minister's visit to Nish the foundation of Macedonian reform was laid.

One year later this programme was enlarged and definitely ratified at Mürzsteg at the interview of the two Emperors Nicholas and Francis Joseph—in the presence of their Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

After the audience a gala dinner was given. Everyone who was anyone either in the country or in the diplomatic service arrived by special train from Belgrade.

It must have been a stupendous task for the Court Chamberlain to arrange a dinner for eighty guests under

such conditions, everything having to be brought from Belgrade. Plate, china, table centres, liveries, etc. The table delicacies were brought from Budapest.

The dinner served in the large hall had a stamp of elegance—the same could not be said of the intimate circle held by the King and Queen after dinner in the same hall (there was no other), for while the table was being cleared every one spoke in very loud tones and smoked. Some of the guests did not even trouble to remove the cigarette from their lips while speaking to the King and often turned their back to him.

I was told at the time, that the German Minister on receiving an invitation to this dinner had replied that he could not give precedence to the Russian Minister. He was told that in that case he had better not appear. He came nevertheless and took the place allotted to him.

Next day we left Nish *en route* for Sofia. We little thought on bidding farewell to the sovereigns that such a tragic end so shortly awaited them.

At the Bulgarian frontier of Tzaribrod Prince Ferdinand's train awaited the Minister, who was received by the gentlemen who had been chosen to form his suite during his stay.

After traversing the beautiful *paso* of the Isker we entered the station of Sofia. General Nicolaief, representing Prince Ferdinand, received the Minister, also various deputations were there to greet him. The guard of honour presented arms, and the band played the Russian National Anthem.

On reaching the Palace Prince Ferdinand met him at the foot of the steps and accompanied him to the suite of rooms reserved for his occupation during his three days' stay. Like that of Nish, the Prince's Palace had formerly been a Conac and, until 1877, it was the residence of the Turkish General Governor.

Prince Ferdinand with his exquisite taste had had it reconstructed according to modern ideas of comfort and convenience, and more suited to the requirements of a European Court. Amongst other things he had added a

throne-room and a suite of reception-rooms, also a very large and fine dining-hall.

As the Palace contains many historical souvenirs of the Orleans family and others, it is full of interest.

Amongst the numerous pictures which adorned the walls were many portraits of Prince Ferdinand himself. Some in uniform and others in fantastic costumes which he was fond of wearing.

There was also a series of portraits of the Emperor Paul of Russia. I learned later that the Prince was persuaded that the soul of this unfortunate Emperor was reincarnated in him.

The ground floor was allotted to visitors and Court dignitaries.

An orthodox Chapel which was built after Prince Ferdinand's eldest son, the present King, had embraced the orthodox religion, by his father's wish.

Ill-natured gossip said that the only time that the chapel was open was when political reasons demanded it through the arrival of some Russian official representative. Such was the case on our arrival. It was Sunday, and the Prince sent to the Minister to say that he would be pleased to see him at the 8.30 Mass, at which he himself usually assisted. Wishing, probably, to pay homage to the religion of his adoptive country, the Prince showed more zeal than is customary to be shown by Russian orthodox sovereigns. At one of the most solemn parts of the Mass, when the priest comes out of the sanctuary holding the sacred Chalice in his hands, the grandson of Louis Philippe and son of the Prince of Coburg, approached the altar steps and stood with bowed head and a prayer-book under his arm during all the prayers.

On the day of our arrival Prince Ferdinand gave an official banquet to greet the Minister.

The beautiful dining-hall, decorated with choice blooms from the conservatories of the Palace (gardening was a great hobby of the Prince), the excellent wine and food, smart liveries of the men-servants; everything was in perfect

harmony and quite on a par with any similar banquet in any of the European capitals.

After dinner there was an official reception. The Bulgarian statesmen were presented to the Minister by the King himself.

A remarkable figure amongst those present was old Karavcloff, the founder of the pro-Russian party. He looked gaunt and emaciated, just freed from prison where he had been confined by order of Stambuloff, and where for years he had suffered the humiliating punishment of flogging.

The Prince found a moment to say to me with a sarcastic smile: "Well, how did my neighbour King Alexander receive you?"

After the presentations, the Prince took the Minister apart for a *tête-à-tête* which lasted until long after midnight.

The Prince, who had great charm and was past-master in the art of fascination, used all his talent in the hope of obtaining what at that moment was his heart's desire: the Independence of Bulgaria, at that time still a vassal of Turkey, and self-government for Macedonia, which would be, in his mind, the first step towards the definite incorporation of that province to Bulgaria.

The programme of the two days, which the Minister was to spend at Sofia, was carefully mapped out by the Prince himself.

On December 14 the day was begun by a walk in the town. After lunch at Daneff's, then President of the Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs, we were driven to see the places of interest: the mausoleum of Prince Alexander of Battenberg, the museum, a church (formerly a mosque), etc.

On reaching that part of the high road leading to Philipoli, and from there to Constantinople, the Prince stopped the carriage. With a majestic wave of his arm, which embraced the vast expanse stretching before us as far as the eye could reach, he pointed to the outline of the mountains scarcely discernible through the mist, and said in his sing-song voice:

"Here you feel already Rodopes. Beyond that point is ancient Byzantium."

One had to be acquainted with the ambitious views of Prince Ferdinand on Constantinople to seize the full meaning of these words.

The dream of his life, ever since ascending the Bulgarian throne, was his triumphant entry into the ancient capital of Byzantium, to don the Imperial robes of its Emperors, to have a Mass celebrated in the Cathedral of St. Sophia, beginning it at the point at which it had been interrupted by the Sultan Mahomet II, when at the fall of Constantinople he entered the sacred Basilica on horseback.

There is a legend which says that the priest who was officiating at that time disappeared miraculously through the wall, and that he will reappear again the moment the sanctuary is freed from its sacrilegious intruders, and continue the unfinished Mass !

Towards evening a torch-light retreat took place in the court of honour of the palace, and later a dinner was given at the Russian Legation.

Next morning the Prince showed us the cathedral which was being built by the Bulgarian people, under his direction, in gratitude to Russia the liberator.

After visiting the coadjutor of the Bishop—the Exarch's residence was Constantinople—there was a reception at the Legation of different deputations, lunch at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and from there we visited the House of Parliament and then followed the ceremony of laying the foundation-stone of the monument to Alexander II, the Czar-Liberator.

Our departure was even more ceremonious than the arrival. State carriages, guard of honour and trumpeters. Prince Ferdinand surrounded by his court left the palace and, in placing the Minister on his right in the carriage, he said in his insinuating voice : " This is how the vassal of the Sultan accompanies his friend to the station." He did not only go with him to the station, but to the frontier of his principedom, accompanied by his ministers and his court.

In the evening of December 16 (29) we reached Vienna. Next morning the Minister was received in audience by the Emperor Francis Joseph, and during the day he had long conversations with the Count Goluchowski, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and our Ambassador, Count Kapnist.

It was always a question of Macedonian reforms which would be acceptable to Turkey and at the same time satisfy the Christian population of the Balkans.

The same evening at six o'clock the Emperor gave a dinner at the Hofburg. The old custom of early dinners at the court was always adhered to, and as they were so short the guests could easily keep other engagements to dine in town.

Punctually at six o'clock the Emperor left his private apartments. In spite of his great age he moved quickly and held himself very erect. Approaching each guest he stopped, drew his heels together, and shook hands.

He was not tall, and wore side-whiskers. There was nothing regal in his appearance, and in the uniform of an infantry regiment, which he wore that day, he would have passed for a general of a garrison town. During the after-dinner conversation the Emperor put a few questions to each one present. After making a general salute to all, he retired in the same quick way as he had come.

A political conference, which lasted until the small hours of the morning, was held between the Minister and the Count Goluchowski; the latter's secretary and myself made a summary of the proceedings.

Next day luncheon with the Count Goluchowski and dinner with the Archduke Francis Ferdinand at the Belvedere Palace. It was New Year's Eve and, according to procedure at the Court of Vienna, there was to be a grand reception at the Hofburg Palace, where the Court Chamberlain and the first Lady-in-Waiting received the congratulations of the guests. We were also present at the ceremony. Prince Liechtenstein represented the Emperor, and Countess Harrach the Empress Elizabeth, although the latter had already been deceased for some years. This function was extremely ceremonious. The guests just passed along, the

men saluting or bowing officially, and the ladies making a very deep curtsey. Prince Liechtenstein shook hands only with the Ambassadors, while their wives were requested to seat themselves for an instant beside the Countess Harrach.

Some year later I described this ceremony to our Emperor Nicholas. It rather surprised and amused him.

On December 19, 1902 (January 1, 1903) we left Vienna, reaching St. Petersburg two days after.

THE Minister's visit through the Balkan States and the political conferences in the capitals seemed to have borne fruit. Our Ambassador at Constantinople wired in the beginning of 1903 that not only had the proposed reforms for Macedonia been accepted by the Sultan, but the latter also wished to express his gratitude to the Emperor for the attentions shown him, likewise for our efforts at Sofia towards dissolving the Macedonian committees.

On the other hand, Count Osten-Sacken, our Ambassador at Berlin, describing a visit which he had received from the Emperor William, said the Kaiser had wired his advice to the Sultan. This was bidding him conform to our demands and introduce the desired reforms as soon as possible. Thus the Balkan mission seemed to have attained the end in view.

While discussing Eastern affairs with the Emperor one day the Minister said that although on principle he objected to concerted action, there were certain psychological moments when such was useful. "The experiment had lately been tried in Japan and in Crete, and likewise in this instance, after having come to terms with Austria on Balkan affairs, it was absolutely imperative that we should also secure the support of other governments. That was our intention and we have succeeded in accomplishing it.

"Had we not done this, the slightest misunderstanding with Turkey would have been a trump card for the other Powers to play. Now that we have got what we want the play is over, we may ring down the curtain.

"The result which it appears we have obtained is all the more important as it means peace and security in the Far East. That is indeed a blessing, as, in war, as in a surgical

operation, one can never foretell the after-effects. Even our victorious war of 1877-78 had its aftermath in revolutionary propaganda.

"The actions of the Government of that epoch were frequently biassed by public opinion, which was often far from having a patriotic tendency; the climax of all this was reached in the attempt at assassination on March 1, remarked the Emperor."

This conversation alone would prove how much Count Lamsdorff wished to secure peace in the Far East, but there were other influences at work which made him tremble for the success of his mission.

The chief of these irresponsible people was Mr. Bezobrazoff, an ex-Captain of the Guards. They did their utmost to undermine the Emperor's confidence in his ministers.

It may be remembered that we had just then—March 26, 1902—concluded an agreement with China about evacuating Manchuria by our troops that had been sent there some time previously.

The Minister insisted on the necessity of keeping our word to China, i.e. only to keep in Manchuria the necessary number of soldiers to protect our railways.

The Minister of War, General Kuropatkin, being on a mission in the Far East, his duties were fulfilled by General Sakharoff, who was of exactly the same opinion on the question of the evacuation of Manchuria as Count Lamsdorff. They both declared that we should evacuate the Chinese province, only securing certain economic guarantees which would undoubtedly be granted by the Chinese Government.

This plan of evacuation was hotly opposed by Mr. Bezobrazoff. The latter had just come into possession of forest-land on the borders of Corea in the valley of Jalou and wished to back up proprietorship with political privileges. After having spent some time in the Far East, he was back again in St. Petersburg and he had managed to get into favour with the Emperor, who gave him frequent audiences and took a deep interest in his tales about the land in the Jalou.

Mr. Bezobrazoff wished to attach great political importance to this concession, which he declared would act as a buffer between Japan and Corea. Naturally, capital was required for such an enterprise, and he persuaded the Emperor to put his own money into the scheme. Several of the Grand Dukes followed suit. Many also of the courtiers who wished to please their sovereign, or to get a good return for their investment, also gave it their financial support.

This Jalou undertaking was, in the opinion of Mr. Bezobrazoff, to be of great importance in our political extension in the Far East. On this account he wished the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to interest itself officially in the scheme.

It was not necessary to be a very great diplomat to see through this scheme, nor to estimate the danger which would result from it through the ill-feeling it would bring upon us from the Japanese.

Count Lamsdorff was wholeheartedly opposed to it.

Seeing that he would get no support in this quarter, Bezobrazoff addressed himself to Admiral Alexeieff. The latter had just been nominated representative in the Far East with full plenipotentiary powers. Later we shall see how this intrigue developed and brought about our fatal war with Japan.

Meanwhile, Bezobrazoff's influence was on the increase and, on May 6, the Emperor's birthday, he was made His Majesty's Secretary of State. This distinction, aspired to as the pinnacle of fame, was only awarded to men occupying the highest posts in the Empire in recognition of a life of devoted service to their country. How he had prevailed upon the Emperor to grant him this was incomprehensible to all. The only explanation was his deep interest in the Jalou affair and in general in regard to all that concerned the Far East. When speaking of it at Court he was absolutely carried away with enthusiasm.

I must give him his due that in this he was unlike many others who could not rise above their own petty financial

interest in the scheme. Nevertheless, nothing but disaster could be anticipated with such an irresponsible man interfering in the course of events.

Those connected with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of Finance, who had dealings with Mr. Bezobrazoff while in the Far East, are unanimous in considering him a very undependable person. Mr. Pokotiloff, then representing the Financial Minister at Peking, wrote frequently to Mr. Witte concerning him.

In one of his letters he writes : " Bezobrazoff is so far from serious, so superficial in deciding most particular and complicated questions, that all the attention of the person interrogating him must be concentrated on keeping him to the subject in hand and in endeavouring to get at the meaning of his incoherent ideas, none of which have any serious grounds."

The want of confidence that the Emperor had in his ministers might explain the dominion that Bezobrazoff had been able to obtain over him.

He considered, and unfortunately he was often right in his surmise, that his ministers would not speak their mind to him in case it should not please him and they should lose their positions and the privileges attached to them. Being thus suspicious of this want of frankness and loyalty, the Emperor thought it well that there should be an independent supervisor over them.

Thus Bezobrazoff superintended the actions of Mr. Witte, Financial Minister ; General Wogack, our Military Attaché at Peking, those of his chief, General Kuropatkin, Minister of War ; and later the Admirals Alexeieff and Abaza superintended the actions of Count Lamsdorff, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

As Mr. Witte was far from popular in Court circles, Mr. Bezobrazoff had no difficulty in getting him into disfavour. It was not so easy with regard to the Minister of Foreign Affairs ; it was the Emperor who facilitated this.

One day he asked Count Lamsdorff if he was acquainted with Mr. Bezobrazoff. Receiving an answer in the negative

His Majesty said that he should send him to the Minister. Shortly after Mr. Bezobrazoff rang the Count up and asked him to give him an appointment. He came accompanied by Admiral Abaza. Both received a very cool reception.

"It is by His Majesty's orders that I am here," Mr. Bezobrazoff began pompously. He saw, however, that he made no impression on the Count. He then began to criticize the weakness and capitulations of our policy in the Far East.

Count Lamsdorff, who was of a very calm nature and usually most amiable, in this instance could not control his indignation.

"What weakness and what capitulations," he replied angrily. "Such a policy would be incompatible with the dignity of Russia and if (which is impossible) His Majesty had commanded me to follow it, you would not see me at this table," he concluded, striking it with his fist.

This attitude taken by the Count had an immediate effect and his visitors hastened to explain that they had been misunderstood.

Some days later the Emperor inquired if the Minister had seen Bezobrazoff. Count Lamsdorff related the nature of his reception, and took the opportunity of communicating the fear with which the Korean affair inspired him.

"I cannot hide from Your Majesty that the activities of Bezobrazoff in the Far East are causing general uneasiness. There are some who, wishing to please him, flatter him in calling him 'the youngest Secretary of State,' etc. I am not of that number. My opinion is that his policy is likely to lead Russia into a nefarious war. Certainly, a war declared by Your Majesty, for instance, to assist the Macedonians or the Boers would be equally undesirable, but at least it would be understood by the Russian people, but a war on account of the Jalou forests would appeal to no one. The situation is rendered still more complicated by the rumours afloat, that Your Majesty has invested his own capital in that concern."

"I have thought of what you say myself," answered the Emperor.

"Will Your Majesty permit me to present him a memorandum of our policy in the Far East in which I oppose amongst other things the accusations of Mr. Bezobrazoff on our exceeding amiability towards China and Japan? It was brought back to me that Mr. Bezobrazoff had said that Your Majesty would not deign even to read my opinions, nevertheless, I should like to submit them to him."

"On the contrary I am deeply interested and I beg you to send me your memorandum without delay."

But a few days later Admiral Alexeieff, who was at that moment at Port Arthur, wired personally to the Emperor that the fulfilment of our agreement of March 26, 1902, with China, referring to the evacuation of Manchuria, would lower us in the estimation of the Chinese. Consequently the Admiral considered that it was of the first importance for us to find a plausible excuse for not evacuating Manchuria.

The Emperor sent this telegram to the Minister accompanied by a signed note. In this he stated having wired to the Admiral thanking him for having put the matter so clearly. He promised to reinforce our permanent units in the Far East. Moreover, in order to test the Siberian railroads, he intended transporting temporarily, beyond the Lake Baïkal, under pretext of manœuvres, two infantry brigades with artillery. Further, His Majesty advised the fulfilment of the agreement of March 26 without, however, endangering the security of our railroads, or diminishing our prestige, or our economic interests in Manchuria.

The Emperor left the carrying out of the whole affair entirely in the hands of Admiral Alexeieff and concluded his telegram by saying that he had requested Count Lamsdorff to inform his representatives at Peking, Tokio, and Seoul, and to invite them to follow the practical instructions of Admiral Alexeieff.

Next day the Minister sent the following letter to the Emperor :

"According to the orders of your Imperial Majesty, I hasten to submit herein the copy of an identical telegram, to the Ministers of Russia at Peking, Tokio, and Seoul.

"At the same time, I consider it my sacred duty to state the following : In withdrawing from the Minister of Foreign Affairs the political questions of the Far East, which are so intimately bound up with the whole of our international relations, Your Majesty leads me to conclude that my work of the last three years does not meet with your approval. Your Majesty indicates at the same time the dawn of a new era in exterior politics, which latter, by Your Majesty's desire, I have so far, in the eyes of foreigners, been the interpreter.

"In view of the present orders of Your Imperial Majesty all that remains to me is to solicit humbly to be relieved of the duties confided to me.

"It would be impossible to realize unity of action, which is indispensable to our cause, if the three representatives of Russia in the Far East receive instructions simultaneously from two chiefs each independent of one another. It would be still more difficult to negotiate with the Foreign Ambassadors of your capital, when they would want explanations of our policy in the Far East, since henceforth it would be confided to the Chief of the Province of Kwantoun residing at Port Arthur.

"All these considerations give me the courage to beg you to accept my resignation.

"I leave your service, Sire, with a clear conscience. All my strength, all my life, has been consecrated exclusively to the honest accomplishment of my duty. The future may explain things."

Two days elapsed before Count Lamsdorff received any reply from the Emperor.

His Majesty assured the Minister of his entire confidence. Only the trend of events in the Far East had made it seem desirable that Admiral Alexeieff should have full authority on Russian questions in those parts. His Majesty feared that receiving news from such a distance, the reports might often be incomplete or contradictory, and neither he nor his Minister would be in a position to get an exact idea of daily occurrences, while Admiral Alexeieff, being in the centre of things, with all the wires converging towards him, was, the Emperor thought, the man best fitted to watch over our

numerous interests, and be the person responsible to Russia and to his sovereign.

The Emperor's letter ended with wishes for the health and strength of the Minister to continue in his service with all his former zeal.

Simultaneously with this letter the Emperor returned after confirming the orders before mentioned in the three identical wires to the representatives at Tokio, Peking, and Seoul.

A few days later Bezobrazoff appeared again at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, probably by order of the Emperor. He tried to draw from the Count the reason of his displeasure and hinted that he could make it known at headquarters. The Minister refused his offers very curtly, saying that he did not require a mediator between the Emperor and himself.

It was necessary to know the ideas of Count Lamsdorff on the divine right of kings, to realize that only the firm conviction that Russia was in imminent danger could have forced him to speak thus to his sovereign.

For the first time, at the report¹ of July 1, the Emperor expressed his doubts as to the wisdom of the policy of Bezobrazoff, and of those working with him. It happened thus : there was a meeting being held at Port Arthur under the presidency of Admiral Alexeieff.

Taking part were : General Kuropatkin, Minister of War ; Mr. Lessar, our Minister at Peking ; Mr. Pavloff, Minister at Seoul ; and Mr. Bezobrazoff.

General Kuropatkin had wired to the Emperor and to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, that they might be prepared for any eventuality, as things were then shaping themselves.

On his side Mr. Pavloff informed us that Japan was threatening Corea with war, should that country oppose the opening of a port on the Jalou. Mr. Pavloff added that he

¹ The word "report" will be employed throughout this work to replace the special Russian word "*Doklad*," a term used to designate in bureaucratic language, the personal weekly work done by the Ministers and the Emperor together. Besides these appointed days, each Minister could be called up any time by the Emperor to a special "*Doklad*," or, request one from his Majesty if necessity demanded it.

had been broached by the Korean Government on the likelihood of Russia giving her support to Corea in the event of war. Mr. Pokotiloff on his part wired to the Finance Minister that Mr. Lessar was up in arms against those members, who had proposed nothing more or less than the annexation of Manchuria to the Russian Empire. Needless to add that the originator of the annexation scheme was Mr. Bezobrazoff.

Seeing that things had gone too far General Alexeieff, at his wit's end, suggested that China should send an envoy plenipotentiary to the Emperor, requesting him to grant a lessening of the guarantees that Russia intended demanding in exchange for the evacuation of Manchuria. On learning of this proposal the Emperor exclaimed: "They have surely climbed down at Port Arthur," and, turning to Count Lamsdorff, he asked what he thought of it.

"It is all the result of each one trying to overreach the other and all are afraid to criticize Bezobrazoff," answered the Minister.

His Majesty replied: "Such an attitude might possibly be taken by people of small minds, but quite inadmissible in such men as Alexeieff or Kuropatkin." To that the Minister had the courage to reply: "The reason is that Bezobrazoff, speaking in your name here, there, and everywhere, has succeeded in terrorizing everyone, and none dare gainsay him."

Things were going from bad to worse and the telegrams from the Far East proved that great discord reigned amongst the members of the Conference at Port Arthur. The one point on which they were all agreed was the evacuation, on principle, of Manchuria. Even Alexeieff and Kuropatkin having come round to this view insisted now on keeping strictly to the agreement of March 26, 1902. Only Alexeieff had lately conceived the idea of an ultimatum to China, with the threat of keeping Manchuria if the supplementary conditions for the evacuation were not fulfilled. When the idea of an ultimatum was presented to the Emperor he protested violently, saying to Count Lamsdorff:

50 RECOLLECTIONS OF A RUSSIAN DIPLOMAT

"We shall decide all with you here. Telegraph in that way in my name to Alexeieff and to Baron Rosen."

A few days later Mr. Witte was spending the evening at the Elaguine Palace where Count Lamsdorff then resided. He was sure that this time the Minister of Foreign Affairs had won a decisive victory. During the day he had met General Kuropatkin, who had just come back from Port Arthur. It appeared that both the General and Alexeieff had quarrelled with Bezobrazoff.

Hoping to annoy the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bezobrazoff advised Mr. Isvolsky (who had just been transferred from Tokio to Copenhagen) to go to St. Petersburg, assuring him that the Emperor wished to know his opinion on the political situation in the Far East. As, during the audience, the question was never broached, Isvolsky took the initiative by stating that there was no possibility of any agreement between Russia and Japan. The Emperor remarked that he was mistaken, that the Japanese had taken the first steps towards negotiations.

It was while Mr. Isvolsky was *en route* that the Japanese Minister had received instructions to that effect.

All this produced a temporary coolness in the Emperor's feelings towards Bezobrazoff. It was noticeable in many ways, amongst others in a note written to Count Lamsdorff dated July 25. In forwarding him the memorandum of the Conference of Port Arthur, his Majesty wrote that at their next interview he and the Minister would make a final decision relative to Manchuria and Corea.

The next interview was Tuesday, July 29, when the Emperor received the Minister at Peterhof. He expressed himself categorically in favour of the evacuation of Manchuria and commanded Count Lamsdorff to call together the Ministers interested, to elaborate the plan of evacuation. "Invite Bezobrazoff," added His Majesty. "He will no doubt keep to his own opinion on the matter, but that is of no importance." After this the Emperor with Count Lamsdorff examined a memorandum presented by the Minister of War relating to the Concession of Jalou.

General Kuropatkin thought it would be preferable to pass it on to foreigners.

Count Lamsdorff did not share that opinion, and the following dialogue took place between him and the Emperor :

"Your Majesty has deigned to interest himself personally in that affair. In my eyes it is a conclusive reason not to renounce it now. A sudden disinterestedness on our part would prove clearly that our aim was a political one and that when it failed we gave up the whole undertaking."

"I share your point of view entirely," replied the Emperor, "but what is to be done now, do you think?"

"I should take the liberty of advising Your Majesty to give the whole affair a commercial character by entrusting it to a serious financial institution, for instance, the Chinese Oriental Bank. This bank, which has an annual budget of 11 milliards, inspires confidence, and if it takes an interest in that affair public opinion will be won over to the notion that the Jalou concession is a purely commercial concern.

"But in such circumstances the personal character of the undertaking would be completely changed: until now it had not included a single Jew."

"It is precisely in this alteration, Sire, that I see the good side of the new order of things."

Finally, the Emperor gave in to his Minister's arguments.

Shortly after these events the Emperor spoke to the Minister about his intended trip to Austria and communicated to him his plans for the autumn. After the manœuvres in the environs of Pskoff and a visit to Libau, His Majesty proposed spending some time in the shooting-boxes of Bieloviege, Spala, and Skernevice, then to go to Darmstadt where he would leave the family and continue alone to Austria.

Towards the middle of September Count Lamsdorff came to Darmstadt. The Emperor showed him a telegram from Alexeieff. The tone was exceedingly pessimistic. In it the Admiral complained that negotiations with Pekin had fallen through, that the Chinese, supported by Japan, were unyielding, the letter was threatening to send troops to Jalou, etc.

Finally, that owing to the present state of things if we evacuated Manchuria, our political prestige was lost. He ended the wire by asking for the Emperor's orders.

"What do you think of this telegram?" His Majesty asked Count Lamsdorff.

"I think it is very serious. There is now the danger of war that I had foreseen."

"What do you think of the position generally?"

"It is difficult for me to give any opinion, Sire, as of late I have been in darkness as to our policy in the Far East and now I have lost the drift of things. Some time ago Alexeieff begged me to rid him of Bezobrazoff, to scrap the Jalou adventure, and to help him to fulfil our agreement with China on the Manchurian questions. To-day his ideas have changed."

"But his opinions deserve consideration, they are sincere and impartial."

"Not quite in this case, Sire. He states that Lessar's negotiations at Peking have been going on already for two months. That is not correct. The telegram commanding Lessar to enter into negotiations was only confirmed by Your Majesty on August 20. Then Lessar does not despair of things at all; on the contrary he wired me that the Chinese ministers are so depressed that concessions could easily be obtained from them.

"Alexeieff may be much more intelligent than I am, but I esteem the situation from quite a different angle, and I am convinced that he will lead us into war, therefore I consider it my sacred duty to tell you so frankly and fearlessly, Sire, never having had any personal interests but yours at heart."

"Yes! that is indeed true!"

"I value one thing above all others that even you, Sire, cannot deprive me of."

"And that is?"

"My conscience. It is that which forces me to speak, to tell Your Majesty the whole truth."

The sincerity of Count Lamsdorff made an impression on



THE EMPEROR

the Emperor, and after showing him his appreciation he kept the Minister to lunch.

These family lunches were frequent at the Court of Darmstadt. On Sunday after Mass we were generally invited either in town to the Neues Palais or to Wolfsgarten, a country house in the suburbs. The Emperor's daughters were generally present at these meals, also their cousin, the charming little Princess Elizabeth of Hesse, who died shortly afterwards at Skernevice.

Leaving the family at Darmstadt the Czar left on the 16th for Austria, where he was going to shoot with the Emperor Francis Joseph at Mürzsteg. Owing to the muddle in Balkan affairs, this journey became one of political importance and the Minister of Foreign Affairs was asked to accompany the Emperor.

There was trouble again in Macedonia. The European provinces of Turkey were seething with revolt. Each day brought alarming news of the persecution of the Christian population by the Turks and, to counterbalance it, the seditious behaviour of the Christians. This question had to be thoroughly thrashed out at Mürzsteg and a remedy found.

Beyond the general reforms proposed in the Christian quarters, Count Lamsdorff suggested supplementing the staff of the General Inspector of the *vilayets* (districts) with Russian and Austrian officers, likewise increasing the power of consular control by creating additional consuls. He also considered that it would be wise to publish the measures adopted in conjunction with Austria.

On leaving Darmstadt the Emperor's suite only consisted of Baron Fredericks, Minister of His Majesty's Household; Count Lamsdorff, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Generals Hesse and Mossoloff, Count Heyden, and myself. We were joined later by Generals Prince D. Galitzine, Prince V. Kotchoubey, and Colonel Count D. Cheremeteff, who had been called from St. Petersburg, and were all excellent shots.

At the station of St. Pölten, an hour's distance from Vienna, the officers who were to form the Emperor's guard

of honour joined our train. They were : Count Uxkull, General Prince Dietrichstein, Colonel Prince Hohenlohe, who was then Military Attaché at the Austrian Embassy at St. Petersburg, and two Colonels, Commanders of the regiments of which the Emperor Nicholas was Colonel-in-Chief.

Our Ambassador in Austro-Hungary, Count Kapnist, was likewise at the station.

His Majesty was met at Vienna by the Emperor Francis Joseph, the Archdukes, and the gentlemen of the suite. It was a beautiful morning and the two sovereigns drove to Schönbrunn in an open carriage ; the route of several kilometres to the Palace, was lined by troops, those of Bosnia with their red fez very noticeable amongst the others. The cheers rang out all along the route until the sovereigns reached the beautiful esplanade of the Palace. The Imperial carriage was followed by those of the suite. The Emperor was received in the Palace by the Archduchesses and after the usual presentations was invited to a gala luncheon, at which the Archduchess Maria Joseph did the honours assisted by the elegant Archduchess Maria Annunziata in the habit of a Canoness.

The speeches at luncheon were favourably criticized by the Press and after lunch decorations were distributed by the Emperor Franz Joseph's aides-de-camp, after which ceremony their Majesties retired to their apartments and we got into our shooting gear as we were due to leave for Mürzsteg at 3 p.m. Besides those above mentioned the following were of the shooting-party : the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, Count Paar, General Aide-de-Camp of the Emperor ; the Prince of Montenuovo, Grand Ceremonial Master ; Count Goluchowski, Minister of Foreign Affairs. Baron Aehrenthal, Ambassador at St. Petersburg, the Counts Lamsdorff and Heyden did not shoot.

After traversing the beautiful Semmering Pass the Imperial train drew up at the station of Mürzzuschlag. There it branched off and we ran alongside the Murz, a picturesque little mountain stream, until we reached Neubourg. From

there we drove off in Tyrolese carriages and arrived towards evening at the shooting-box. A floral arch with the traditional greeting of the Tyrolese huntsmen, "*Waidman's heil*," was erected on the village green.

The shooting-box, although perfectly appointed, was too small to allow much entertaining, so most of us put up in private houses. At six o'clock supper was served. We were eighteen at table, and on leaving the dining-room we each received a booklet with directions for the next day. The details were most explicit: the name of the gun and his carriage companion, the hour of departure, which varied according to the distance to be covered, the time it would take to drive, to ride or to walk, the hour fixed for the start and the return. The first to start left at 5 a.m. The Emperor Francis Joseph was particularly fond of the shooting at Mürzsteg and he arranged all the details himself. The morning of September 18 I was called at 5 a.m. Count Paar was my carriage companion, and we left at 5.30. It was still dark. We drove the first part of the journey, and were accompanied by riders bearing torches, but when the road became impracticable for the carriage we went on horseback and, finally, we took the steep little paths on foot. Where the road branched off I separated from my companion and took my stand at the place allotted to me.

The morning mist gradually dispersed and suddenly the rising sun shed its rays over a most fairy-like panorama, a plain of verdant green and on the horizon the faint outline of the Alps.

That day was a chamois hunt. I had scarcely taken up my position in a little hut made of branches, when a herd of them appeared in the distance. No shot had to be fired before a given signal. It appeared as though these beautiful creatures were aware that until then there was no danger, for they came right up within range of the guns. These were placed on the slope, one above the other, and each out of sight of the other.

The mountain air was so pure that the eye was deceived as to distance. When the signal was given I was just going to

shoot at a chamois as I thought within range of my gun, but the beater standing behind me restrained me. At last he whispered: "Now you may shoot." A double shot followed and two chamois were brought down. We remained at our posts until the end of the beat, and it was all so fascinating that I scarcely noticed the passing of the hours.

The shooting over, we all assembled at an appointed place. The old Emperor, who had not had a shot that day, questioned his guests about the day's enjoyment. The Emperor Nicholas had eleven chamois to his credit. When, on seeing me, His Majesty inquired what luck I had had, and when I told him that those were the first chamois that had ever fallen to my gun he said that these were the first he had ever shot. At four o'clock we returned home, and I found several telegrams to decipher.

After supper, during which we had very enjoyable Tyrolese music, we went to see the day's bag.

I spent the evening preparing different data necessary for the interview of the Count Lamsdorff with the Count Goluchowski.

Next day, September 19, was begun by a long walk on the borders of the Murz, lunch with Count Goluchowski, then the two ministers conferred together. Baron Aehrenthal was also present. Count Goluchowski's secretary and I took down the details of the conference, later to form the basis of an identical note to be sent to the Ambassadors of Russia and Austria-Hungary at Constantinople.

To this note was to be added an extensive plan of reform for Macedonia: administrative, religious, and financial.

These reforms were to be introduced under the control of the two Powers and with the help of the military attached to the superintendents.

One little detail: the English Ambassador at Vienna, Sir Francis Plunkett, had received orders from his Government to make it known that the latter was disposed to be a party to the plans of reform which were to be drawn up for Macedonia at Müritz. Nevertheless, as it is well known,

England did not take part in the reform plans. In the afternoon the two ministers met again and approved of the formula of the note and the plans submitted to them.

When the two sovereigns came back from shooting, Count Lamsdorff sent his projected plan to the Czar, while Count Goluchowski took it personally to the Emperor Francis Joseph. When the Emperors had confirmed them they were forwarded to the respective Ambassadors at Constantinople.

Before supper Count Goluchowski presented me with the ribbon of the Order of Emperor Francis Joseph. When a few minutes later I went to thank the Emperor His Majesty said : " You have worked very hard to-day and the results have been brilliant ! Let us hope that this will tend to re-establish peace in the Balkans."

September 20 was the last day of the hunt. It was to be in the mountains at a certain distance. The Emperor started at 5 a.m. and the rest followed shortly afterwards. I got there about eight o'clock. My position was on a little hillock above a stream, beyond which there was a rather steep hill covered with trees and brushwood. The deer there were beyond the range of my gun. I had just missed two when the dogs sent out a beautiful beast within my reach. It had already been wounded and as I fired it dropped dead. He was a magnificent fellow with enormous antlers. Just then the horns sounded the end of the hunt. It had lasted two and a half hours.

A few moments later I saw the old Emperor coming down the path leading to where I stood. He called out : " Have you had any luck ? " I pointed to the deer lying in the stream, and said that when I shot him he had been already wounded. The Emperor asked from what quarter he had come out so as to know whose gun had touched him first. He asked me to accompany him. He walked very smartly, like a young man and carried his gun over his shoulder. He wore his stockings below the knees, which were uncovered. Sometimes he would stop a moment to talk, now and then he would ask me some questions, or pass some remark as we walked along.

He said : " I think that the Emperor Nicholas did not get a shot ; I am sorry for that ; he had a good position, a very good place, but it is the wind ; I had a detestable wind."

The Emperor was accompanied by his doctor, a Tchek.

" Do the Russian and Tchek languages resemble each other ? " His Majesty asked. He then asked me about the different Russian dialects and tried to find a similarity between the two languages. The word partridge in both Russian and Tchek were almost identical, and turning to me, he said, rolling his r's : " How do you say that, Kourro-patka ? "

Suddenly the Emperor stopped short and turned back saying : " I have taken the wrong road." The two roads branched off and immediately he had noticed that, it was the wrong turning he had taken.

After half an hour's walk we came out on an open space where we had all to meet. As soon as the old Emperor caught sight of the Czar he called out : " What a pity you did not get a shot."

" How do you know that ? " asked the Czar astonished. Francis Joseph knew his favourite ground so well that he was able to say that not a shot had left the direction where the Czar had been standing. During the luncheon that followed that last meet, just before our departure, the chief huntsman came to report the morning's results. My stag was the subject of discussion. Francis Joseph asked several questions so as to make certain whose prize it was. The huntsman thought that the Archduke Francis Ferdinand had fired the first shot, the Emperor was of the opinion that it belonged to Count Goluchowski, finally the stag was judged to be mine.

Lunch over, we drove back to Neuberg. In the train I had to decipher long telegrams from Mr. Nelidoff from Rome, relative to the projected visit of the Emperor to Italy.

The Italian Government gave formal assurances to our Ambassador, that every precaution had been taken to prevent any hostile demonstration on the part of the Socialists. Mr. Nelidoff suggested, at the same time, that a



THE EMPEROR FRANCIS JOSEPH'S HUNTING BOX WAS SITUATED IN MURZSTEG IN THE SOMMERING ALPS

letter of explanation should be sent to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in case the journey should not be undertaken. Anticipating events, I may mention that the Emperor did not go to Italy in 1903. The visit of King Victor Emmanuel was only returned in 1909 at Racconigi.

When we got back from Mürzsteg the Emperor gave orders to the Minister of the Imperial Household to call Mr. Loupoukhine, then Director of the Police Department in Russia, to Darmstadt. He was sent on a mission to Rome to ascertain the probable risks of the journey. In spite of fairly reassuring results and the guarantee of the Italian Government that there was no danger, Court influences predominated. Yielding to the request of the Empress the Emperor gave up the idea of the Italian trip.

Prince Dolgorouky, the Emperor's General Aide-de-Camp, was despatched with a personal letter from the Emperor containing explanations and excuses which Prince Dolgorouky had to corroborate by word of mouth, and he was the bearer of a letter in reply from the King, in which Victor Emmanuel did not hide his disappointment at the Emperor's decision. He also gave full vent to his annoyance when speaking with the Prince at his shooting-box at San Rossore, where the interview took place. "The Emperor had no intention of coming to see me. Why have raised my hopes to disappoint me at the last moment." Continuing, the King said :

"I ask you to allow me to say all that I feel and you may decide how much you will repeat to the Emperor."

"For my part, Sire, I dare to ask permission to protest when occasion demands," answered Prince Dolgorouky. The tone of the whole conversation was very bitter, the Prince told us on his return, and his request to be received by the Queen, which he repeated twice, was met by an obstinate silence.

On September 21 we left Mürzsteg for Darmstadt.

Three days later the marriage was to be celebrated of Prince Andrew of Greece with Princess Alice of Battenberg, daughter of Prince Louis and of Princess Victoria, the eldest sister of the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna. The numerous

relations of the three royal families were assembled at Darmstadt for the event : Russian, English, and Greek.

Queen Alexandra with Princess Victoria, Queen Olga of Greece, the future King Constantine with the Princess, Prince Nicholas and the Grand Duchess Helen, the Grand Duke Sergius Alexandrovitch and the Grand Duchess Elisabeth and many other distinguished personages. The King of England was represented by the Prince of Teck, brother of the present Queen.

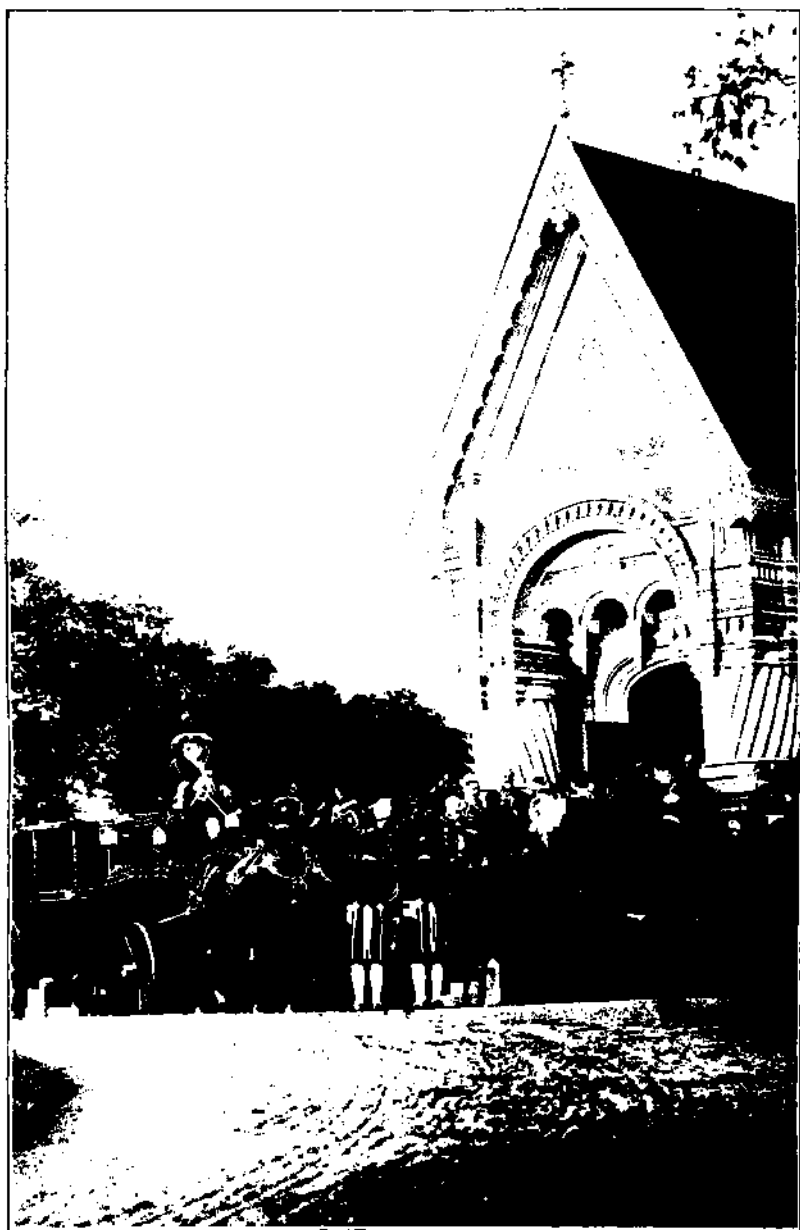
The marriage festivities lasted some days. The Grand Duke of Hesse, whose own little court was particularly elegant, was responsible for the good taste displayed in all the arrangements. On the day of the marriage ceremony the State carriages, driven by coachmen in wigs and three-cornered hats, typical from the period of Frederick the Great, drove first to the old Palace. The Protestant ceremony was performed in the church of the Palace. This over, the Royal Party then betook themselves to the Russian Church where the orthodox service was to take place. The streets were lined with military and crowds turned out to witness the ceremonial procession.

In the evening there was a family dinner at the Palace.

The Count Lamsdorff and the Diplomatic Corps, then at Darmstadt, were invited to dine at the Staats minister.

After dinner the young couple left by car for Yugenheim, a castle beautifully situated in the neighbouring mountains, and which was at one time the property of the Duke Alexander of Hesse, brother of the Empress Marie Alexandrovna, wife of Alexander II. The Emperor stayed there frequently and it has since become the property of Princess Louis of Battenberg, daughter-in-law of Duke Alexander.

The day after the wedding a military entertainment, followed by a tea at the officers' mess, was given by the officers of the Dragoons, of which regiment the Emperor was Colonel-in-Chief. The same evening the Grand Duke of Hesse gave a ball in his palace in honour of the young couple. When the Polonaise was being played the Empress Alexandra, giving her hand to her eldest sister, Princess



THE RUSSIAN CHAPEL AT DARMSTADT

The Wedding of Prince Andrew of Greece and Princess Alice of Battenberg, 1903

Facing page 60

Victoria of Battenberg, made her appearance, then followed her two other sisters, the Grand Duchess Sergius and the Princess Henry of Prussia. At the ball the four royal sisters danced a figure of the Lancers; one of the four partners was their brother the Grand Duke.

Another ball was given by the Prince and Princess Louis of Battenberg at the old palace, and a gala spectacle in the pretty little theatre of the Grand Duke brought the festivities to a close.

After the departure of the royal visitors, who had only come for the wedding ceremony, Darmstadt resumed its normal life, and was only brightened by representations at the Grand Ducal Theatre or by the Hunt, to which we received a standing invitation.

After Mass on Sundays we were invited to lunch at the Grand Duke's, at the Neues Palais, and later, when the Court left town, to the country seat of Wolfsgarten. The new Palace had been entirely arranged by the Grand Duke, who had brought into its installation all his refined and rather fantastical taste. The style of the little castle of Wolfsgarten was much simpler, nevertheless the Grand Duke's taste was obvious in parts. In the centre of the smoking-room there was a large marble fountain with gold fish. Above it was hung a beautiful full-length portrait of the Grand Duchess Victoria Melita, painted by Kaulbach. In the painting the Grand Duchess was wearing a light dress of transparent grey gauze which enhanced her beautiful figure and, if possible, made her appear still more regal.

It was here, after lunch, that the Emperor's daughters and the charming Princess Elisabeth, the Grand Duke's daughter, used to play. With her vivacity and love of fun, their games always seemed more enjoyable when she was there. She was most popular in the Grand Duchy, where she was generally called "Our Princess," and the grief was universal when she died a few months later at Skernevice, poisoned, as they said there, by oysters.

Amongst the guests at the Princess Alice's wedding was Prince Henry of Prussia, brother of the Emperor William.

After the ceremony he went to Berlin for a few days and came back to Darmstadt where his wife, Princess Irene the, Empress Alexandra's sister, had remained.

The Emperor had asked him when he left for Berlin to tell the Emperor William that he should like to meet him at Wiesbaden. Count Lamsdorff suggested that an invitation to Skernevice to shoot in the autumn might be agreeable to the Kaiser. He was fond of such little attentions and while at Skernevice he could review the regiment of which he was Colonel-in-Chief: the Dragoons of Narva. However, the Emperor did not approve of this proposal.

Immediately on receiving the Emperor's invitation the Kaiser wired that he would be at Wiesbaden on September 22 O.S. (October 4).

The Emperor, fearing that this interview following so closely on that of Mürzsteg might offend French susceptibilities, sent Count Lamsdorff to Paris with a personal letter to the President of the Republic. Count Lamsdorff had likewise orders to inform the French Government of the negotiations at Mürzsteg and to state the purely courteous character of the Wiesbaden meeting.

The programme for that visit, which only lasted from morning till evening, contained a military review, a dinner, and a gala entertainment.

The Minister remained three days in Paris. The Emperor's letter was presented officially at the Élysée, where the President gave a luncheon in his honour, and Mr. Delcassé, Minister of Foreign Affairs, invited him to dinner.

During Count Lamsdorff's short stay in France the Japanese Minister had orders from his Government to inform him by the intermediary of Mr. Delcassé, that Japan was quite ready to give us all the concessions we required of her. The representant of Bulgaria also was requested to bring to his knowledge that the Government of Sofia was fully satisfied with the programme drawn up at Mürzsteg and they were quite prepared to comply with it. It was during the three days of the Minister's stay in Paris that it

was decided that Mr. Nelidoff, Ambassador at Rome, would exchange posts with the Prince Urusov, then Ambassador in Paris.

On September 22 (October 4) the Czar, accompanied by the Grand Duke of Hesse and Prince Henry of Prussia, left for Wiesbaden. At the last moment the Kaiser made it known that Prince Bülow, the Chancellor, would assist at the interview, in consequence of which Count Lamsdorff was also invited to take part. As soon as the Emperor Nicholas arrived at Wiesbaden the Emperor William took him straight from the station to a local garrison review. The regiment of the Hussars of Podeborn (of which the Czar was Colonel-in-Chief) had been brought specially to Wiesbaden in order to take part. The banquet given in the town hall was followed by a gala performance in the theatre of the town, one of the finest theatres in Germany. The piece given was a patriotic play and was boring to the extreme !

In the Imperial box were the two Emperors, and amongst other distinguished ladies were Princess Schaumbourg Lippe and the Duchess of Saxe-Meiningen, the Kaiser's two sisters.

During the *entr'acte*, while conversing with the Count Alvensleben, Ambassador at St. Petersburg, the Emperor William turned to the Czar, saying in a loud voice : " Are you satisfied with the Ambassador ? In my opinion he gives me very little information about affairs in St. Petersburg." The Kaiser was very fond of witticisms such as these. It was his way of distinguishing people as he thought, but was most embarrassing to those thus distinguished !

Next day the Kaiser came to Wolfsgarten. This visit was strictly private ; even the personal suite of the Emperor remained at Darmstadt.

The Emperor William, realizing that the Czar disliked too much ceremony, particularly emphasized the intimate character of the interview, giving it quite the tone of a family meeting. He avoided political conversations, seemed to prefer being together with the family, played tennis with the Emperor, and sometimes even joined in the games of

the young Grand Duchesses. Evidently he managed to strike the right note, for when he left, the Emperor said to Count Lamsdorff that it was the first time that he had felt at ease with his usually excitable and fussy visitor.

The Chancellor was of the Emperor's suite and Count Lamsdorff gave a lunch at Darmstadt in his honour. I happened to be the Chancellor's neighbour at table. His conversation was very animated, he was most enthusiastic about Italy and said, jokingly, that when any of the young men in his Ministry begged for the post of Consul at Naples he always refused it, saying that he reserved that position for himself.

Meantime things in the Far East were causing the Minister great uneasiness. The Japanese threatened openly to send their army and their fleet to Jalou and to make a descent in Corea. Admiral Alexeieff notified the Emperor of the danger and the possibility of war.

In face of this alarming news the Emperor commanded the Minister to draw up a telegram to the Admiral, which he would sign personally so as to render it more effective. His Majesty began to draft the message himself, but then he passed it over to Count Lamsdorff to write it. The Count did so, but ended it with the Emperor's own words: "I am convinced that you will respect my ardent desire and save Russia from armed conflict."

According to the instructions despatched to Alexeieff, the eventual occupation of Southern Corea by the Japanese was of minor importance to the Imperial Government than their descent on the Jalou. When the telegram was signed by the Emperor I ciphered it and despatched it myself.

It was September 24 (October 6) and I remember how delighted the Minister was to have succeeded in persuading the Emperor to send this document. Shortly afterward, October 5 (18), our representants at Tokio, Peking, and Seoul received orders from the Emperor to forward all their correspondence with the Admiral Alexeieff, to their Chief, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and to undertake nothing without his consent. It was therefore in the absence of these

dangerous counsellors of the Emperor that Count Lamsdorff succeeded in changing our policy in the Far East for the better. Unhappily the improvement was not to last. As we shall see later on his return to St. Petersburg, the Emperor made other changes which destroyed all the plans of Count Lamsdorff and eventually brought about our unfortunate war with Japan.

The German Press did not fail to note the difference in the policy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who wished at any cost to avoid war with Japan, and that of Admiral Alexeieff, who seemed to encourage the warlike spirit; in fact the German newspapers went so far as to say that the Admiral published articles in the local press, which were meant to stir up strife. Mr. Lessar, our Minister at Peking, complained bitterly of the Admiral's policy. He was so revolted at it that he begged to be recalled, saying that in present circumstances the post of Minister to China was absolutely a sinecure and that any midshipman could easily fill it.

On October 25 their Imperial Majesties left Darmstadt for Skernevice (a hunting-box in Poland) where they intended to spend some time shooting, and the Minister returned to St. Petersburg.

On November 2 (15) the young Princess Elisabeth of Hesse died at Skernevice. The Court intended returning to Darmstadt for the interment, but the Empress Alexandra fell ill with an inflammation of the ears, which prevented the journey, and it was only on November 22 (December 5) that their Majesties returned to Tsarskoe Selo.

In the middle of December Alexeieff telegraphed to the Emperor and to the Minister of Foreign Affairs that he found the demands of Japan to be excessive and unacceptable, and equivalent to a demand that Russia should formally recognize the Protectorate of Japan over Corea. He considered it in every way preferable that the Cabinet of Tokio should enforce its pretensions on Corea without the sanction of Russia. In his opinion, any concession which we would make to Japan would only bring us nearer to the rupture, the great calamity which the Emperor had always tried to

avoid. To overcome that difficulty he suggested that all our interests in the Far East should be submitted to a most minute examination.

On receiving this telegram the Emperor called together at Tsarskoe Selo an extraordinary council composed of the Grand Duke Alexis, in his quality of Grand Admiral, Count Lamsdorff, General Kuropatkin, and Admiral Abaza. The discussion was heated. Count Lamsdorff, who was first to speak, was most emphatic in denouncing any rupture of negotiations with Japan. The Grand Duke Alexis objected, saying that Japan had nothing to do with our relations with China, as Manchuria was only dependant on the latter country. Count Lamsdorff remarked that it was unreasonable to expect that Japan should be indifferent to a country in which there were so many of their own people and such extensive economic interests.

The Emperor was of the same opinion as his Minister of Foreign Affairs. After a few more objections on the part of the Grand Duke Alexis and of Admiral Abaza it was decided to continue negotiations with Japan and Count Lamsdorff was to prepare instructions to that effect. After such a decision one would have thought that the Minister of Foreign Affairs had won the day and that his opinion had prevailed definitely, to the detriment of the irresponsible influence at work in the Far East. Unhappily such was not the case.

Later we shall see the disastrous influence of an institution created to act as controlling power and named "The Special Committee for Affairs in the Far East." As if in defiance, this Committee took up its abode in the Winter Palace just opposite the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Abaza was elected its general Secretary. He made his debut by addressing a circular to all the Ministries informing them that henceforward all the affairs of the Far East would be wholly in the hands of His Majesty's representative, and they would pass through the "Committee."

Quite discouraged, and seeing that he was powerless to ward off the dangers which he foresaw, Count Lamsdorff

again begged the Emperor to relieve him of his responsibility by accepting his resignation, to which he received the following reply :

" How can you make such a request at the present moment ? You know my confidence in you ; that I communicate everything to you and that I hide nothing. Continue your functions."

Thus 1903 came to a close with ominous clouds hanging over us. Before speaking of the events of 1904, I must mention the part that the Emperor William had assumed. To make it clear I must retrace my steps a little.

For some time past the Kaiser had been trying to draw us away from the Balkan Peninsula by pushing us towards the Far East. Should he succeed in this the long-cherished hope of German invasion into the Slav country would be at last realized. This plan had reached maturity when the idea of a railway uniting Hamburg with the Persian Gulf was conceived in Berlin, and it is from that time that the Emperor began to shower attentions on the Sultan Abdul Hamid and the whole Mussulman world.

From that time, too, dates his sudden friendship for Bulgaria and his plan, aided by Ferdinand of Coburg, to turn it against its one-time Liberator.

It was essential for Germany to possess the good will of Bulgaria, as the latter was the only country between Berlin and Bagdad that was not quite pro-German.

On Roumania Berlin could quite depend, as King Charles was to his last days a faithful servant of the Hohenzollerns, and the German ally, Austria-Hungary, had nothing to lose either but all to gain in the German policy in the Balkans. In the first place, with her leanings towards Germany she was happy to help to transform the Slav population into the manure necessary for the " Great German Culture," as the German historian¹ usually remarked in speaking of the dominating rôle that Germany was supposed to be called upon to play on this earth, and on the other hand, Austria's little plan was to get easier access to the Ægean Sea, which she had coveted for a long time past.

¹ Rohrbach.

The Kaiser's energy could not brook half-measures. He never lost a chance of trying to worm himself into the good graces of the Czar in touching the sensitive cords of his nature, nor of gaining his sympathy on every possible occasion. Later it will be shown how often he abused the confidence of his neighbouring sovereign, trying always to take him unawares. But all that did not suffice. He was determined to succeed in compelling him to act in such a way that Russia would be kept out of European affairs and sunk in those of the Far East. It was with this intention that the Emperor William encouraged us to construct the great Siberian railroad, that he called the Emperor in his private correspondence "Admiral of the Pacific" and signed "Admiral of the Atlantic." It was with the same intention that he occupied the port of Kio Tchao. While on a visit to Russia in 1897, he made use of his favourite method of taking one unawares, when suddenly driving one day in the park of Peterhof he turned to the Emperor asking him if he had no objection to this occupation and advised us to do the same with Port Arthur. In trying to entangle Russia in active policy in the Far East, the Emperor William hoped to make us quarrel with Great Britain, whose interests there were so vast. Lastly, in the event of a war with Japan, he counted on weakening our alliance with France by offering us his assistance.

If, however, Russia persisted in remaining faithful to France, the Emperor would content himself with drawing the latter country towards the alliance that he proposed to Russia, and which was the height of his ambition.

We must understand clearly the character of this alliance which the Emperor William had so much at heart. With real Teutonic arrogance he did not intend the parties to be on an equal footing. Russia was to be completely subordinate to German interests. She had to contribute to the destruction of the Anglo-Saxon peril and in general fulfil all the designs of pan-Germanism. To enable him to act more directly on the Emperor Nicholas, the Kaiser gave him a special private

code so that they could correspond without the intermediary of the Ministers.

I do not know if the Emperor William ciphered himself the telegrams to the Czar, or deciphered those of His Imperial correspondent, but the Emperor Nicholas gave the code to the Count Lamsdorff who, not having time for this work, asked the Emperor to confide the code to me to cipher and decipher. It was thus that I was the first person to learn the contents of those telegrams from the Kaiser of which many have been published since the Revolution.

The first telegram of that collection relates to the time following the interview of Mürzsteg. It is dated from the Neues Palace, December 1, 1903. This is the text :

" In the published reply of the speeches made in England and in France you will have seen how angry the Western Powers are that the Mürzsteg programme has been forced on the Porte. The visit of the hundred British Parliamentary—gentlemen and ladies—to Paris shows how ' the Crimean combination ' is warming to its work. Your ally is making rather free with his flirt. You should pull him up a little ! I am still voiceless. Weidmannsheil !

" WILLY."

It is quite evident that the Kaiser makes use of the programme of Mürzsteg only as a pretext, to raise a doubt in the mind of the Czar that because a few English parliamentarians had come to France, this country was renewing the " Crimean Combine." In case this visit should not make the same impression on the Emperor he advised him to " Pull France up a little."

The next is dated January 7, 1904.

" Sincerest thanks. The terra cottas are from my ceramic shop at Cadinen. May your efforts in the direction of maintaining peace with honour be crowned by success ! According to private information from Genoa the two new ironclad cruisers bought by Japan leave Ansaldo's Docks to-morrow for Corea manned by British officers and crew. Their departure end of January is a ' canard ' started by Japan. Admiral Matsu actually at Genoa, to mislead your

Mediterranean squadron, for fear of their being captured by it. Best love to Alice.

“WILLY.”

It would be hard to see in this telegram any real anxiety for the welfare of Russia. The words relating to the English were certainly written with a desire to awaken the Emperor's suspicions and encourage feeling against England.

On January 9, 1904, the Kaiser wires again :

“Signal to Admiral of Pacific. Further information from private and trustworthy sources runs as follows :

“(1) British Government has sent intimation to the great firm in London who supplies your fleet with coal that it is forbidden to give you any more coal. (2) Japanese Admiral Matsu now at Genoa in command of the two ironclad cruisers bought from Argentina, made known at an interview that *Japan* did not *buy* the two ships but that *England* *bought* them clandestinely at the same time as two Chilean battleships in order not to let them fall into Russian hands ; and has not only *presented* them to Japan but manned by British officers and sailors, demonstratively cheered on leaving London. (3) A bill has been introduced in Chilean Parliament to empower Admiralty to sell to Japan two ironclad cruisers, seven torpedo-cruisers, two torpedo boats, two transport, and several iron-clad turrets with guns built by Gruson (Magdeburg), probably for forts or new defences—for base in Corea. There seems no doubt that the money which is so lavishly spent by Japan must come from a ‘very friendly’ service, as it cannot be accounted for in the Japanese exchequer. Large quantities of tinned ‘conserves’ have been ordered for Japanese army and navy in America. Hope Alice is better and that she liked the box with Roman candlesticks from the Saalburg, they are exact copies of those found by Jacobi during excavations.—In true friendship.

“ADMIRAL OF ATLANTIC.”

This wire is still more insidious than the preceding one. It contains such ridiculous assertions, that it was only the audacity of the Kaiser could imagine for a moment that they would be believed by their recipient. Although he assured



THE INDIAN FAMILY

Indians for 70

that the information came from a trustworthy source, who would believe that the Japanese Admiral had related all that the Emperor William attributes to him, and it is still less probable that the English would allow any Japanese official to divulge their actions, which they were certainly guilty of, but which they equally certainly intended to be kept a secret.

These three telegrams, dated towards the end of 1903, prove sufficiently the personal part played by the Emperor William in the events preceding 1904.

In what follows I shall again speak about this "friendly" correspondence which the Emperor continued constantly in the hope of gaining his end. In the innumerable letters and telegrams he touched upon various subjects. One question which interested him at the end of 1903 was the neutralization of Denmark. This is what he wired to the Emperor Nicholas on December 14 when the King of Denmark was passing through Berlin on his way to Gmunden to be present at the silver wedding of the Duchess of Cumberland :

"The King, coming from Copenhagen, is going to visit us in two days. Shall I broach the subject of our last conversation to him about the neutrality and the *herd*? of the Danish waters in case of forcing them by foreign overwhelming fleets? My voice is much better. Love to Alice.

"WILLY."

The Emperor Nicholas replied that he thought the visit of the King an excellent occasion to learn his opinion on the subject of the Danish neutrality.

After the visit of King Christian the Emperor William wired again on December 18 :

"Conversation with King of Denmark most satisfactory. He perfectly understood the seriousness of the question and the vital importance for Russia to have a well-guarded rear if involved in complications in the East. He openly avowed the impossibility for Denmark to uphold the neutrality against any superior naval power or the safe guarding of Danish waters against overwhelming fleets. He thinks the

solution proposed that Russia and Germany should offer to guarantee Denmark's neutrality most acceptable and said that a load was off his mind. He has promised to say nothing about the matter to his Minister, a real parliamentary man, until you have decided how the affair is to be treated. H. v. Bülow, to whom I referred the matter, is most pleased with the proposal, is also of opinion that Danish Prime Minister and before all their Parliament must be kept out of it. That it was to be an agreement secretly made between the three sovereigns, through any instrument they liked to draw up by their representatives ; that in *case of war* Denmark was to immediately declare its neutrality and that we two declare our firm intention to guarantee it and if necessary to help to defend it by force.

" I shall be thankful if you kindly let me know whether this proposal suits your wishes ? The King was very well, thanks you for your kind intentions in this matter, and was *evidently* relieved when he saw that his two great neighbours were fully *d'accord*, and would come to his rescue. Best love to Alice ; my voice again fairly in order."

"WILLY."



THE EX-EMPEROR AND KING EDWARD VII

ON January 14 (January 1 according to the old style) there was the traditional ceremony at the Winter Palace. After Mass the Emperor gave audience to the members of the Diplomatic Corps, and, addressing the Japanese Minister, His Majesty expressed the hope that complications would be avoided and that all would be peacefully arranged. Finally he said that Japan must remember that Russia was not only a country but was a large part of the world, and that there was a limit to her patience. It was the Emperor himself who repeated his own words to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, adding that the Secretaries of the Legation, who were standing behind their chief, must have heard them, as they looked rather downcast. These words were commented upon by the Press all over the world and came back to St. Petersburg in a cable from America. The Emperor was highly delighted, and at the "report" on January 19 he said to the Minister that in his opinion the danger of war was averted, since he had told the Japanese Minister that he did not want it.

In spite of all this, however, things were not shaping themselves as favourably as one seemed to believe.

The Emperor William was the first to give warning in a wire to the Czar on the Russian New Year's Day.

"Signal to Admiral of Pacific.—Press and private communications show that Japan's answer of the 12th is not of peremptory character; nevertheless, I am informed from two absolutely trustworthy sources, that not only all Japanese statesmen are decidedly for war, but have actually won Marquis Ito over to war party.

"ADMIRAL OF ATLANTIC."

The same day our Minister at Tokio, the Baron Rosen, informed us that Japan declined our proposal *re* the neutral zone, protested against the defence to construct fortifications on the Korean Coast, and demanded guarantees in Manchuria. The tone of the Japanese note was nevertheless pacific; the Government of Tokio appeared to want to continue negotiations. The amicable character of this reply was noted by Count Lamsdorff in a letter which he sent to the Emperor on January 15. He mentioned that the question of the neutral zone was not one of primary importance for us, while on the contrary, the fortifications on the Korean Coast would threaten the independence and the territorial inviolability of Korea, which we were bound to protect according to the terms of Article I of the project given by us to the Japanese. At the same time Count Lamsdorff expressed his regret that Baron Rosen should have touched upon the question of Manchuria with Mr. Komoura, as his instructions were only to do so if all our other conditions were accepted.

Admiral Alexeieff's interpretation of the Japanese Note was much more decisive. He considered that in this last reply the Japanese had been much more arrogant than in the previous one. The Emperor, who was under the impression of his conversation with the Japanese Minister on New Year's Day, did not attach much importance to the Japanese reply, being sure that his words would arrange matters.

January 19 brought another wire from the Kaiser :

"Signal from Admiral of Atlantic to Admiral of Pacific.—News from trustworthy Chinese source has arrived. Governors of Yangtze Valley have been apprised by Japan, that war with Russia being unavoidable, they were to lend their protection to foreign commercial interests. Chinese Foreign Office has ordered all Governors of littoral provinces to remain strictly neutral. Japanese Colony in Tschili has been warned from home to expect outbreak of war by end of this month.

"WILLY."

On January 21 the Emperor replied to this telegram,

thanking the Emperor William for his information. He said he was hopeful that an agreement might be arrived at with Japan, as the terms of their last proposals were moderate and peaceful. His Majesty added that the alarming news concerning preparations for war in the Far East came from a certain source, whose interest it was to stir up strife. We see that Nicholas II, like his Minister of Foreign Affairs, found the Japanese reply amicable enough to allow the continuation of negotiations with hopes of success. But the difficulties that Count Lamsdorff had encountered since the Emperor had created Admiral Alexeieff his representative in the Far East, made him fear more delay. This fear was not unfounded. The negotiations with China which he had intended should precede those with Japan were broken off ; the occupation of Manchuria continued for an indefinite period ; the evacuated areas were again occupied and negotiations with Japan begun on quite a different footing.

It was for these reasons that, when reporting to the Emperor on January 25, Count Lamsdorff was determined to prove to his Sovereign the necessity for posing the following categorical questions to the Admiral Alexeieff so as to make him responsible :

1. Are the differences existing between Russia and Japan of sufficient importance to take the risk of war ?
2. If in the affirmative, should we nevertheless continue negotiations until we have tried all the means of reaching a peaceful solution of the crisis.
3. If we should not succeed, would it not be more to Russia's advantage that the rupture should come from Japan, who would then be the aggressive party.
4. Would the dignity of Russia not be lessened if we had to bear the hostile influence of rival countries, who alone would reap the advantage of a war with Japan. A war which would not have been brought about with any vital interest to Russia.
5. Would it not be opportune to include from now onward, in our future agreement with Japan, the question of rights and privileges obtained by various Powers in Manchuria on the terms of treaties ratified by China.

6. Can we, in case of arbitrary occupation of Corea by Japan, leave our demands from China unchanged. In the negative case, in what must these changes consist ?

On January 19 these proposed questions of the Minister were approved by the Emperor, who commanded the Count to send a telegram to Alexeieff based on the six points above mentioned. On January 29 Admiral Alexeieff replied that the Japanese Government insisted on the recognition of Japan's Protectorate over Corea, that she was continuing her military preparations and that under those conditions one could not hope much from further negotiations.

Nevertheless the Emperor commanded that diplomatic proceedings should be continued and every attempt at reconciliation made.

In the beginning of January the Court had removed from Tsarskoe Selo to the Winter Palace at St. Petersburg. There had been the usual traditional balls, and various theatrical performances in the beautiful Ermitage Theatre, which dates from the time of Catherine the Great. One of these performances was given on February 2. During one of the *entr'actes* the Emperor and the two Empresses were chatting with their guests. Amongst the Foreign Ambassadors present was also the Japanese Minister. With the coolness and presence of mind so characteristic of his race, Mr. Kurino feigned to be flattered at the words the Emperor addressed to him, and we all noticed how deeply he bowed when the Emperor shook hands with him. That scene, which was followed by a long conversation between the Emperor and Mr. Kurino, seemed rather reassuring, and on observing it, it would have been difficult to predict the events of the next day.

That day, while we were all busy in the office, a card was brought to me. It was that of Mr. Oda, one of the secretaries of the Legation, who frequently brought communications from his chief. He gave me a sealed packet, addressed to the Minister, and asked for a written acknowledgment. This detail rather surprised me, especially as he seemed to intend

waiting my return from Count Lamsdorff's cabinet. When the Minister opened the packet, it contained two notes. The one announced that the Japanese Government, after having vainly attempted to reach an amicable solution, and tired of waiting for our reply, had decided to bring these unsuccessful negotiations to a close and cease diplomatic relations by recalling her minister and the staff of the Legation and the Consulates. The other note was a request for passports: Mr. Kurino had fixed his departure for Wednesday, February 10.

Count Lamsdorff, who was astonishingly calm in the most trying moments, just uttered a Russian exclamation meaning "They have gained their point!"

He asked me to tell Mr. Oda that his notes had been delivered and he could go, but the secretary, however, insisted on having a written receipt, which was given to him. He then took out two other packets, one containing the lists of persons requiring passports and the other—medals of the Japanese Red Cross, with a special request from Mr. Kurino, to have them delivered. Having accomplished the official part of his mission, Mr. Oda expressed his deep regret and good wishes and went away.

Mr. Kurino had enclosed with the official notes, which his Government had ordered him to despatch to the Minister, a friendly private letter regretting that affairs had not turned out as he would have wished, adding that he trusted that the interruption of diplomatic relations would be of very short duration. On February 5 the Emperor assembled a special Council in his Cabinet in the Winter Palace to decide what was to be done.

The Grand Duke Alexis and General Kuropatkin were of opinion that although we had to be ready for war, we should not begin it.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs shared their point of view, but he added that unless the Japanese had firmly decided to fight, they would never have interrupted the negotiations and broken off relations so suddenly.

He said that some time previously we had decided not to

take umbrage in the event of a descent of the Japanese in Southern Korea, consequently in case of that eventuality we should not consider it *casus belli*. Following these discussions Admiral Alexeieff was authorized to attack the Japanese only if they crossed the 38° of latitude, but not to oppose their descent in Southern Korea or on the eastern coast as far as Genzan inclusive.

The council over, the Emperor detained Count Lamsdorff and spoke to him most kindly. He let him feel how grateful he was that the Count had spared them any recriminations which might have made the meeting a stormy one, whereas, thanks to him, all had gone off so well.

Excessive kindness was a distinctive characteristic of the Emperor.

War was not yet officially declared, but no one doubted any longer that blood would flow. Germany who in reality wanted this war, while pretending to be our friend, could now triumph over us.

Certainly this country thought only of her own interests. But what interest had Russia in that unpopular war which no one understood, no one wished for, and all disapproved of?

That question must be answered to the country, and to posterity by the irresponsible councillors who did their utmost to lead Russia into that disastrous adventure of which the two revolutions of 1905 and 1917 were certainly the fatal consequences.

Those people are much more culpable towards Russia than our enemies the Japanese, for it was in their interest to come to terms amicably with us, and they would certainly have preferred that to any other mode of procedure. Proof of this were the friendly offers of Marquis Ito in 1901 of which I have already mentioned.

Mr. Kurino, who in the end was commanded to announce the cessation of negotiations, must have felt exasperated that all his efforts at conciliation, backed by that of Count Lamsdorff, were always frustrated by outside influence. He knew perfectly well that the tone of the Foreign Office and that of the Special Committee for the Affairs of the Far East

were diametrically opposed, and he saw how their warlike ideas so often predominated the peaceful policy of the Minister.

During the week which preceded the rupture, Mr. Kurino often came twice a day to the Ministry for the reply which his Government was impatiently awaiting. He always received an evasive answer as the Minister was obliged to await Admiral Alexeieff's decision, and this was long in coming.

Worried by this uncertainty and waste of time, and suspicious of being the dupe of a double game, as whenever he went over to the Committee he heard quite an opposite version. There he was told clearly that Russia would not give in, and that Japan must not expect her to do so.

Taking into consideration that this warlike language was held by persons who boasted of having the ear of the Emperor and of controlling the dealings of the appointed Minister, which was certainly true, who can then blame the patriotic Japanese for the stand which he took.

Who can reproach him for having shared his suspicions and fears with his Government, his doubts as to the sincerity of the game going on around him, thanks to the dual powers created in the principal posts of the Administration. Was it not his duty to open the eyes of his Government to all these facts?

In the evening of February 8 the Emperor, the Empress, and the Dowager Empress surrounded by the Court were present at the Opera in the "Maria Theatre." The Rous-salka Opera by Dargomyjsky was being given. Shaliapin and Sobinoff were taking part.

During one of the *entr'actes* the audience called for the National Anthem, which was repeated three times by the orchestra, soloists, and chorus. The audience almost brought down the house with their enthusiastic applause. If I remember well, Shaliapin, who since has transferred his allegiance to other gods, knelt down before the Emperor at the words "God save the Czar" and finished the anthem in that position. From where I was seated I did not lose a

detail of the whole scene. The Emperor came to the front of his box several times to bow to the cheering audience.

After the theatre, according to custom, I called at the Ministry to see what wires had arrived in the evening. I was just leaving when a courier brought a letter from the Emperor for the Minister. It had the appearance of the small envelopes in which His Majesty usually sent the Kaiser's missives and I was prepared to decipher it, when the officer who had brought it insisted that it was urgent and that he had had orders to give it to Count Lamsdorff without delay. It was one o'clock in the morning. Count Lamsdorff was awakened, and a few moments after he called me to communicate the contents of the envelope.

It was a secret telegram from Admiral Alexeieff, announcing that during the night of February 8 Japanese torpedo boats had suddenly attacked our squadron lying in the outer roads of Port Arthur. The ironclads *Retvizan*, *Czarevitch*, and the cruiser *Pallada* had been struck.

Further details were to follow.

The disastrous war of the Far East had begun. Nothing now could stop the fatal course of events.

From the point of view of international right, the Japanese attack, without previous declaration of war, was inadmissible. Unpardonable, however, was the negligence of Admiral Alexeieff! Even at St. Petersburg it was a known fact that the Japanese squadron was lying already for some time past at Wei-hai-Wei opposite Port Arthur, while Admiral Alexeieff, who was constantly talking of the imminent danger of war, did not seem to notice it.

There was a wire from Mr. Plançon, the then Director of the office of Admiral Alexeieff, giving a few supplementary details. It seemed to be a justification of his Chief's actions: "A detachment of Japanese torpedo boats unexpectedly attacked our squadron in the night of the 8th. . . . We opened fire, which lasted one hour, but the torpedo boats succeeded in making their escape."

The day after the fatal news, the Minister was summoned to the Winter Palace.

"Did you think this possible?" were the first words uttered by the Emperor. "And to think that all that happened when we were deliberating here yesterday!" The Minister replied that for some time past he had thought there was a possibility of war and it was for that reason on the previous day he had drawn His Majesty's attention to the attitude of the Japanese, whom he felt were quite prepared for the struggle.

The Emperor commanded the Minister to draw up the proclamation of war to the people.

It was the season of Court festivities, but all were cancelled and a religious service was ordered to ask for a blessing on our armies.

I was on duty as Master of Ceremonies in the Palace. Great excitement and enthusiasm prevailed in the crowded halls and the most contradictory and impossible rumours were circulated from one to another.

To reach the church of the Palace one had to pass through a suite of rooms where, when the Emperor passed with the Dowager Empress leaning on his arm, silence reigned supreme. His Majesty was followed by the Empress Alexandra with the Grand Duke Michael, and then in order of precedence came the other Grand Dukes and Grand Duchesses. The service in church was most touching and impressive. All were moved to the depths of their hearts, and there was scarcely a dry eye.

The service over, the Emperor and Court returned in the same way, but there was no longer the same silence. The Emperor was cheered to the echo, all etiquette was thrown to the winds. Military caps were waved and patriotic shouts resounded on all sides. In the midst of that enthusiastic crowd the Emperor advanced slowly step by step, his face only betraying the emotion that he felt; but he looked very decided and his step was firm. The crowd was so dense that he could scarcely move forward and he stopped for a moment. We thought he was going to speak, but after an instant he passed on.

The attitude (at least officially) which the Great Powers

adopted towards us in this new phase was rather satisfactory. Prince Bülow assured the Count Osten-Sacken that Russia could depend on Germany as on a sincere and loyal friend and on German neutrality.

France, while fearing *casus foederis*, advised us how to raise the value of our securities which were very low at that time. The Italian Government gave us the offer of four ships which Chili had ordered from her. The Emperor Francis Joseph sent a telegram of sympathy to the Emperor, at the same time expressing the hope that our policy in the Balkans would be modified, in view of present events.

Does not this anxiety on the part of this ally of Germany point to the proof of the wish of the latter to have a free hand in the Balkans, while getting us inextricably mixed up in the Far East. Finally, Lansdowne declared that England would not take part in the struggle nor was the interference of any other Power to be feared.

The day after the Imperial Proclamation of War, was that of the Minister's weekly reception for the Diplomatic Corps. His calm demeanour when chatting with the diplomats surprised them. When the Austrian Ambassador touched on the Emperor Francis Joseph's wire regarding the Balkan Question, Count Lamsdorff replied: "You understand, my dear Ambassador, when one can send three million bayonets, two hundred thousand men to anywhere else do not necessitate any change in our policy."

On February 10 (23) Count Lamsdorff had a long conversation with the Emperor, who said: "We are in Lent, and the Church ordains us to be merciful and to pardon our enemies, but I have no pity in my heart for the Japanese. After their insult to Russia, nothing remains but a war to the bitter end, so that they will not want to begin again."

The Minister replied: "Your Majesty's words at Livadia about Alexeieff often recur to my mind: 'That notwithstanding his intelligence he would neither recognize the quality of the Japanese army and fleet, nor understand that

it is always dangerous to treat an adversary as a negligible quantity.' The words of Your Majesty are fully confirmed by actual events."

The Emperor : " Yes, that was a fault which we all committed. But who could have supposed that the Japanese would attack us in Port Arthur, that stronghold which we thought impregnable."

Lamsdorff : " I have already had the honour of informing Your Majesty that in my opinion the Japanese did not wish as much as before for a peaceful issue. They were perfectly aware of all our doings, of the strength of our armies, and of the extent of our preparations for war. Consequently, they made their plans and hastened to execute them. I took the liberty of mentioning this at the meeting which Your Majesty held on the 8th February, before the attack of Port Arthur."

The Emperor : " Yes, I remember perfectly well. But how connect these facts with the letter from Mr. Kurino in which he expressed the hope of a prompt renewal of the interrupted diplomatic relations ? "

Lamsdorff : " Mr. Kurino and the Marquis Ito before him were quite sincere, and wished not only to maintain peace but to establish sound relations between Russia and Japan. It is to Tokio that one must look for the explanation of events."

The Emperor : " Yes, it is Japan alone that is the guilty party. The war over, she must be rendered impotent, and deprived of the right to have an army and a fleet. I don't suppose England would make any objection."

Lamsdorff : " Sire, I firmly hope that Russia will be victorious, but it is precisely then that we must be lenient. If we carry it with too high a hand, we shall certainly meet with resistance elsewhere, either in the shape of a Congress or a coalition. We must also bear in mind that at that moment we shall be exhausted with the struggle. If we are unable to enforce our demands—as was the case in Berlin after S. Stefano—we risk causing general discontent in the country where the results obtained may seem

disproportionate to the sacrifices made. Meantime, we must insist that Japan is the only culprit.

"To-morrow I shall send out a circular protesting against the Japanese action, and declaring that we do not recognize the concessions which Corea will be obliged to make under compulsion of its invaders.

"We shall also state and register the violations of the law of which Japan has been guilty."

The Emperor : "In that province we shall have irrefutable documentary proofs."

Lamsdorff : "When the time comes it is on these documents that we shall take our stand. We must in the first place come to terms with France and Germany so as to prevent any foreign interference. It seems to me that our duty will be to chase Japan from Corea and clearly establish the requirements of Russia, *but nothing more*. It would be dangerous to lead people to expect too much. Disillusion would inevitably follow."

The Emperor made a gesture by which the Minister understood that he considered this programme insufficient. Probably those who were near His Majesty had drawn a much more brilliant if more dangerous perspective.

The Emperor then spoke of the general enthusiasm which had burst forth when war was declared. "I did not expect such a spontaneous and unanimous movement," he said. "The war was not a popular one, and I myself was opposed to it. But as soon as it was felt that the honour of Russia was at stake, the country rose as one man."

Lamsdorff : "If the calamity was inevitable, Sire, we have at least the consolation of saying that we did not precipitate it. In face of excited public opinion the part of Minister of Foreign Affairs is not of the pleasantest. It is he who must advise moderation. I did my utmost to avoid war, or at least to defer it until the time when we should be better prepared. The present moment is not propitious, and I hoped all along that Japan would not take the final step. My conscience is clear, and we must only bow before the will of Providence, while trying to come out of this trial

with dignity, and to the advantage of Russia. Above all, we must not let ourselves be carried away."

A few days later General Kuropatkin, relieved of his duties as War Minister, was named Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Manchuria, while Admiral Makaroff was entrusted with the command of the Fleet of the Pacific. On taking leave of Count Lamsdorff, General Kuropatkin revealed to him a very daring plan. It consisted of expelling the Japanese from Corea, then landing in Japan to continue the war.

At his next "report" the Minister suggested to the Emperor that it would be well to draw up the conditions which we intended imposing on Japan when the war was over. He referred to Kuropatkin's plan as dangerous. The Emperor asked "Why?" "Because we could be cut off," answered the Minister.

"By whom?"

"The English and Americans."

"I do not share your fears, especially as we should only have landed one army corps."

This dialogue proves that the war-like ideas of Kuropatkin did not displease the Emperor.

Continuing his first idea, the Minister spoke of the difficulty one would meet with, in view of the poverty of the Japanese Treasury, in raising a contribution from that source.

"Her friends could advance the money," replied the Emperor.

From the following telegram it is difficult to judge what were the real feelings of the Kaiser as he saw the accomplishment of his dearest hopes.

"February 28. Gathering from your last kind information operations in Manchuria will take several months, I have resolved to take my holiday trip to the Mediterranean. I shall go by the Bay of Biscay and cruise about the coast of Italy, Sicily, visiting different ports, among them also

Malta and Gibraltar. Two months of illness followed by two months of very trying Court festivities and work in town are the reasons why the doctors wish for rest and sea air for me. Best love to Alix.—WILLY."

This time the Emperor William does not touch on politics. He awaits a more propitious moment for doing so. Telegraphing to the Czar before starting, he only wants to give an impression of friendly sympathy and to mention that he is only undertaking the cruise on doctor's orders, because he has heard that our operations in Manchuria will take some time.

On March 4 (17) I was sent to Paris on a mission to the Ambassador Nelidoff, with whom I had several questions to discuss: Our new French loan, the mission of Colonel Marchand in the Far East, the creation of a Press office, etc.

I was also bearer of thanks from the Imperial Government to Mr. Delcassé, who had been instrumental in organizing the return to Russia of our officers and crews of the *Wariag* and *Koreetz*, two battleships which had been lost at Tchemulpo some time previously.

Mr. Delcassé received me in his Cabinet on the Quai d'Orsay. Having enquired about the Emperor's health and that of the Minister he passed on to present political events. The mission and plans of Kuropatkin interested him particularly.

During the conversation I told him how Russia appreciated the friendship of France, and how grateful we were to have had our sailors sent home so comfortably. Mr. Delcassé replied: "It was quite the most natural thing to do, and was very simply arranged. I invited the gentlemen from the *Messageries Maritimes* into this very room and told them that as it was the Emperor's wish, it had to be done! And it was done!"

He continued: "Did you hear what I said a few days ago in the Chamber? I took advantage of a discussion concerning the Presidential visit to Italy and the credits necessary to that effect, to declare that the corner-stone of

our policy was without doubt the Alliance with Russia. Both the extreme Left and the extreme Right were unanimous in their approval ; in fact, they were so much under the impression of my words that the Right forgot their intention of asking for credits for the Presidential visit to the Pope, while the credit which I had asked for was voted unanimously. In general the enthusiasm for Russia is great. Everywhere they are working for your wounded. Quantities of workrooms have been opened for that purpose. My wife presides over one." He then spoke to me of the agreement that France had just concluded with England on the subject of Morocco, and with which she was in every way satisfied.

On leaving, I told Mr. Delcassé that I intended going from Paris to Rome, and that I hoped to see the Pope. He praised the remarkable qualities of Leo XIII, whom he knew personally, and whom he had seen shortly before his nomination as Minister. "A few weeks later," he added, "when I had come to the Quai d'Orsay this would have been no longer possible. Nevertheless, I have still continued on good terms with His Holiness, because I am a real Catholic. The Holy Father sends now a Rosary to my wife or an image to my daughter."

On seeing me out, Mr. Delcassé asked me to tell Count Lamsdorff that France would do her utmost to facilitate Russia's task during this trying time.

A few days later I left for Rome. I was the bearer of a gift from the Emperor to the Cardinal Rampolla, Secretary of State, which I had been commanded to deliver personally. The Imperial Government wished to express its satisfaction at the arrangement just signed with the Holy See concerning the Polish subjects of Russia. In the letter which the Minister had given me for Mr. Goubastoff, our representative at the Vatican, he asked him to procure a papal audience for me.

I reached Rome in the beginning of Holy Week. It is only those who have spent these holy days in the Eternal City, who have assisted at the numerous religious services

in its wonderful basilicas, and in the mystical atmosphere of its churches, to realize the intense impression they produce. On Easter Monday I was favoured by being able to assist in the Sistine Chapel at an audience given by the Pope to Hungarian pilgrims.

Seats were arranged in a semicircle for the numbers of faithful who had been there for some time already. At first one heard a distinct murmur, then these sounds swelled louder and louder as the papal procession passing through the halls of the Vatican came nearer. Just as one could distinctly hear the words, "Eviva Papa il re," accompanied by loud hurrahs, within the doors of the Chapel a vision appeared: Leo XIII, with his emaciated transparent features waxen in pallor, in his pontifical robes and crowned with the tiara, seemed as if floating above the enthusiastic crowd which he dominated from his "sedia gestatoria," and surrounded by the pontifical court.

On entering the Chapel, this admirable prelate, who seemed so ethereal as scarcely to be of this world, raised his hand to bless the assistants. The enthusiasm became almost delirious: some wept, others sobbed; although I am not a Catholic, I, too, shared the general emotion. I felt a lump in my throat and my eyes dim as I followed the fragile hand of Christ's Vicar blessing the faithful. The vision passed on. The chair of the Holy Father was placed at the foot of the Altar and then he said Mass. After which he addressed a few words to the Hungarian pilgrims, and then the procession returned in the same way as it had come.

Next day I received a private audience with the Pope. I was introduced without any ceremony into His Holiness's Cabinet by Mgr. Bisletti, master of ceremonies at the papal court.

The Pope, all in white, was seated in a deep Renaissance arm-chair. He received me most graciously, and spoke of politics for quite a long time. The statesman whose intelligence was far above the ordinary and the erudition first-rate had taken the place of the great pontiff of yesterday who had seemed no longer of this earth.

With a youthful energy he touched on the political questions of the day. The Polish Catholics in Russia were the subject of heartfelt interest. He also spoke of the affairs in Manchuria, and discussed the doings of Isvolsky, then Minister in Japan, with knowledge and interest. He was well acquainted with and appreciated Mr. Isvolsky, who had been our representative at the Vatican. At the end of the audience he enquired about my family, and although not Catholic he sent his blessing, saying that an old man's blessing always brought happiness. I bowed low and retired.

The etiquette of the pontifical court demands that each one who has been received by the Pope must give an account of it to the Cardinal Secretary of State. I submitted to the rule all the more willingly as I had an official message for the Cardinal. This reception made a totally different impression on me. His features were very pronounced and ordinary, his manners very vivacious, and altogether there was nothing refined about him. His eyes were shifty, and seemed rather more cunning than intelligent. Although he did his utmost to be amiable he was utterly lacking in the charm that pervaded Leo XIII.

On April 4 the Kaiser announced to the Czar the Franco-British agreement regarding Morocco, warning him at the same time of the close relations between France and Britain :

"Have received from private source that France and England are on the eve of concluding secret Treaty about Morocco. England seems to leave Morocco to France for great compensations granted by the latter to England probably in the East.—WILLY, Admiral of Atlantic."

On April 13 we received the deplorable news of the loss of the *Petropavlosk*. The gigantic ironclad struck by a mine sunk in a few minutes. With her perished Admiral Makaroff and all the crew, except the Grand Duke Cyril, who was on board, three officers and forty-three sailors.

The Emperor William did not let that occasion pass without making his sympathies known to us. He called

at once on our Ambassador, the Count Osten-Sacken, and in the conversation he said: "How often I have warned your sovereign as to the Japanese peril. I even played the spy myself so as to get better information, but His Majesty always told me it was nonsense!"

Baron Knorring, coming from Berlin on April 3 (16), had been requested by Count Osten-Sacken to repeat the Kaiser's words to the Minister.

However, the Emperor William was not discouraged by the reception the Emperor Nicholas gave to his information (according to his own account) and he continued to play the "spy"; on April 19 he telegraphed from Syracuse:

"Malta very interesting. Mediterranean fleet in splendid condition, ready for anything. Interest in war most keen, and quite pro-Japanese. To my utter amazement prevails firm conviction that ultimately Japan will totally beat Russia and impose peace on her! *This is strictly confidential!* Weather lovely, like August; and heaps of flowers. Best love to Alice. Crimean combination hard at work!"

WILLY, Admiral of Atlantic."

While the Kaiser played the part of the disinterested friend of Russia, whose devotion went so far as to play the "spy," his military attaché at St. Petersburg did his little part of spying at our expense. He was caught in a restaurant on the outskirts just as he was paying some employées of our Staff for information which they were giving him. One of the party involved in this affair was a certain Ivkoff, who had sold our mobilization plans to the Japanese.

Out of consideration for the Kaiser, the Czar had this scandal hushed up, but the attaché left St. Petersburg immediately, on leave "for the good of his health."

Although England sympathized with Japan, she was at the same time planning an alliance with Russia. The first advances on these lines were made by Edward VII personally at the Danish Court, in a conversation that he had with Mr. Isvolsky, our Minister at Copenhagen. In speaking of the "entente" that had just been concluded between

England and France on the questions of Morocco and Egypt, the King expressed the wish that an agreement could be reached on the questions that interested both England and Russia.

It was to Mr. Hardinge to whom the lot of furthering this projected alliance fell. He was named British Ambassador at the Imperial Court, arriving in St. Petersburg on May 17th (30).

His first visit to the Ministry left a very favourable impression. He began by speaking in favour of the agreement which King Edward had broached with Mr. Isvolsky at Copenhagen. Wishing from the start to put his future relations with the Ambassador on a footing of mutual confidence, Count Lamsdorff said: "I shall be quite frank with you. You will find us ready to meet you, but there can be no successful issue to such negotiations unless on either side there is frankness and loyalty."

The Ambassador said he was quite of the same opinion, and asked the Ministers' permission to repeat their conversation to the Marquis of Lansdowne, and on leaving he said that King Edward had sent his compliments and hoped to see the Minister shortly at St. Petersburg.

The Emperor was absent from St. Petersburg at that time, but when he returned Count Lamsdorff informed him of the conversation with the new English Ambassador and King Edward's intention of coming to Russia. "Only not at present," exclaimed the Czar, "not during the war."

The "entente cordiale" between Great Britain and France irritated the Emperor William. His bad humour was increased with the news of the Franco-Italian agreement corroborated by the visit of President Loubet to Rome.

Obsessed by the idea of being surrounded, and not admitting the idea that Germany should be excluded from any agreement whatsoever, the Kaiser could not control his anger, and gave it full vent at a military review at Potsdam.

All the foreign military attachés were present, but the Emperor, visibly angry and irritated, spoke to none of them

except to the Russian attaché, whom he called to his side and to whom he was demonstratively amiable.

We got this information from Colonel Schebeko himself. He said that during the long conversation that he had had with the Emperor, the latter did nothing but speak insultingly of the English and menaced the French who, he said, had become too arrogant, and that soon he would come down on them in such a way that they would not forget it.

Two days after the disastrous naval battle of August 10, during which the squadron of Admiral Witheft sustained such heavy losses, the Tzarevitch Alexis was born. On August 24 he was baptized with great pomp in the church of the palace at Peterhof.

Amongst the eminent personages who came to the christening of the Tzarevitch was Prince Louis of Battenberg, married to the eldest sister of the Empress Alexandra. He was commissioned by King Edward to speak to Count Lamsdorff about the anxiety of the public concerning the Russian views on India. Receiving the reply that Russia had no aggressive intentions with regard to India, Prince Louis assured the Minister that in England they were quite sure of his peaceful intentions, but that both the King and his Government had less confidence in the other counsellors who were near the Czar !

Prince Henry of Prussia, brother of the Kaiser, was also present at the christening, representing his brother. The day of his departure he approached Count Lamsdorff, saying how pleased he had been with his stay at Peterhof.

Prince Henry said he had a long conversation with the Czar, who had asked him to present his most friendly assurances to the Emperor William. The Minister replied to this : " I am very happy, Monseigneur, to see that we are following the good old traditions." " We always wished to maintain them," replied Prince Henry.

Military operations in the Far East had reached a point when it was necessary to think what was best to be done with regard to our fleet in the Baltic. Should it be left inactive



THE TZAR OF ALEXANDER

or sent out to the seat of war ? This question was discussed in the beginning of September at a council in which the Emperor, the Grand Dukes Alexis and Alexander took part, also the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, of War, the Naval Minister, and Admiral Rojdestvensky.

The Grand Duke Alexander and the Minister of Foreign Affairs were against sending out the fleet for the following reasons : The possible danger to the squadron on such a long voyage, the difficulty of coaling, the small chance of success against the Japanese fleet, three times its size ; and lastly, the time of year. When the squadron would reach the waters of the Far East the port of Vladivostock would be frozen ; thus, in view of the last eventuality, Count Lamsdorff advised the delay of at least a few months before despatching the squadron.

In spite of all these considerations, the contrary opinion prevailed, and the Council advised an immediate despatch. Considering the weakness of the Baltic Squadron the Emperor wished it reinforced by some units from the Black Sea. However, according to the secret Anglo-Japanese agreement, Britain promised in case of war between Russia and Japan to demand the stipulation of the old treaties to prevent our fleet crossing the Straits.

The Emperor then suggested making offers to England of concessions in other quarters if she would be obliging in this case. Instructions in this sense were forwarded to our Ambassador in London, and when they were admitted for his approval the Emperor said that at least they would have tried every means at their disposal.

After the discussions on that subject the Emperor discussed at length the various military events of the war. The taking of Loa-Yan by the Japanese, according to the Emperor, marked a stage in the actual campaign. He believed that we were on the eve of a long interval which ought to be taken advantage of to form a new army independent of that of General Kuropatkin. The name of the Grand Duke Nicholas was mentioned as commander of that new army.

Viscount Fontenay, who at the time of the rupture between Japan and Corea was Consul of France at Seoul, and who after Mr. Pavloff's departure undertook the protection of our interests, had just arrived at St. Petersburg. He brought most interesting details of the loss of the cruisers *Wariague* and *Koreltz*, and about Japan and Corea in general, and carried a personal letter from the Emperor of Corea, which he gave the Emperor at the audience. The Emperor of Corea complained bitterly of the Japanese ill-treatment; he declared that he did not recognize the forced rule imposed on his country, and he protested his loyalty and devotion to the Czar and Russia.

The Corean Minister, who continued his residence at St. Petersburg, also sent a letter to the Minister, addressed to General Kuropatkin, containing very important information for us on Corea and the Coreans.

On September 25 the Court left Peterhof and removed to Tsarskoe Selo. The same evening the Emperor, the Empress, and the Tzarevitch left for Reval, where His Majesty wished to bid farewell to the squadron which was leaving for the Far East.

On October 18, the name day of the heir to the throne, the Emperor detained Count Lamsdorff after lunch. He said he wished to read him a letter which he had just received from the Emperor William and in which the subjects mentioned by the Kaiser were extremely varied.

He began by approving the decision of the Emperor in recalling the Admiral Alexeieff and in replacing him by General Kuropatkin. Then having learned that the Admiralty intended removing the squadron from the Black Sea where it lay inactive, he approved highly of that measure and advised us to cross the Straits unexpectedly without giving any warning. "The English" he added, "would then only have to bow to an accomplished fact."

To this Count Lamsdorff objected that it was very probable that the British, who had at that moment in the Archipelago almost one hundred and forty vessels, would make no opposition to our ships leaving the Black Sea,

but that more than probably, seeing that we had infringed the conditions of the treaties, they would do the same and enter the Black Sea. In giving us such advice, the Kaiser was perfectly well aware where it would lead us to, had we been foolish enough to follow it.

Early in the morning of October 24, the first news of the famous incident of the Doggerbank reached us. The first information was that the squadron commanded by Admiral Rojdestvensky having caught sight of a flotilla of English fishing boats in the North Sea had opened fire. Two men were killed, some wounded, and one ship sunk. It is superfluous to recall the violent indignation that this strange incident caused in England and the animosity in the Russian-Anglo relations which existed until the affair was referred for judgment to the Tribunal of Arbitration at The Hague.

As soon as the news was received, the Minister advised His Majesty to offer our regrets to the British Government and to assure them that if necessary the victims would be amply indemnified. On leaving the Emperor the Minister went straight to the British Ambassador, and at the moment when Mr. Hardinge was preparing to hand him a "protest," he said: "But, my dear Ambassador, I am making the first step in this affair, I have just come from the Emperor with orders to offer you his regrets, and also those of the Imperial Government, and to tell you how much he feels about that horrible incident!"

It is thus that the Minister avoided the English protests and instead received the thanks of the Ambassador. It was only on October 13 (26), that the Naval Minister received two wires from Admiral Rojdestvensky, who announced that he had opened fire only when he saw that amongst the English fishing boats there were foreign torpedo boats.

Having requested the English Ambassador to call on him, the Minister read the two telegrams to him. Mr. Hardinge insisted that the fact remained that our squadron had opened fire on innocent fishermen and asked that an inquest should be opened. "Now," said the Minister,

"you *ask* for an inquest, but I insist on having one," and he continued: "Infamous is the only term for the act committed by the Japanese, and that is a nation having the honour of being an ally of England."

Although naturally the British Ambassador appeared dubious of the presence of Japanese torpedo boats in the North Sea, he had nevertheless to acknowledge that shortly before the incident twenty Japanese had landed at Hull. He insinuated that the torpedo boats fired on by Rojdestvensky might belong to the Russian Squadron.

Admiral Avelan would not allow any such supposition. He had information from his headquarters, who knew exactly the time of arrival of each of our torpedo boats at Cherbourg, that they had all entered the port before the incident had taken place, consequently there could not have been any Russian torpedo boats in the North Sea. In comparing these facts with the declarations of the British fishermen, who acknowledged the presence of some torpedo boats in their midst, Admiral Avelan concluded that Admiral Rojdestvensky was correct in his surmise.

On October 27, Count Lamsdorff suggested to the Emperor that the incident should be examined by the Court of Arbitration at The Hague and begged His Majesty, as promoter of the Peace Conference, to take the initiative. His Majesty agreed with this idea and the following wire was sent to London:

"Wishing to throw as much light as possible on all that has taken place in the North Sea, our Imperial Master finds it necessary to submit this question to a scrupulous examination by an international inquest commission furnished by The Hague Convention. By supreme order Your Excellency is invited to propose this solution to the British Government."

The Emperor William could not have wished for more favourable circumstances towards attaining his ends than those created by the incident of the North Sea.

On October 27 he wired to the Emperor Nicholas, this time offering openly to oppose to the Anglo-Japanese

Alliance a pact between Germany, Russia, and France. He accused Mr. Delcassé of being Anglophile and England of preventing our coaling. To remedy this the Kaiser offered his services and advised us to send all our orders, military and naval, to German houses, just as the Japanese dealt either with Italy or at Whitehead's! As to the Doggerbank incident, it was the Kaiser's opinion that our squadron should not have opened fire, especially in European Waters.

The Emperor communicated this telegram to Lamsdorff, who returned it to His Majesty, accompanied by a short note saying that the close traditional relations between the two neighbouring monarchies could be made good use of against English politics.

Having started his campaign the Emperor William was determined to make it as successful as possible.

Thus the day after the despatch of the above-mentioned telegram, Baron Holstein, this mysterious and important official of the Wilhelmstrasse, called on our Ambassador in Berlin and told him, almost in the same terms, what his master had suggested to the Czar concerning a Russo-Franco-German Alliance. He was also authorized to add that, in the event of our consent, the Russian Government should categorically ask France if she considered a war between Russia and England a *casus foederis*.

The visit of Baron Holstein was described by Count Osten-Sacken in a secret letter which the Minister submitted to the Emperor with an explanatory note. Count Lamsdorff said in this note that while an alliance with Germany, especially under the present circumstances, was certainly desirable, on the other hand we must not lose sight of the constant wish of Germany to make us quarrel with France. To put such categorical questions to France would be very indelicate, especially as she always was most friendly towards us. Finally the Minister urged great prudence and forethought on such a delicate affair.

In spite of this advice the Emperor Nicholas II replied to the Kaiser that such an agreement between Russia, France,

and Germany, would be very much to his liking, and he thus accepted the idea of a Russo-Franco-German Alliance against England and Japan. While asking the Emperor Wilhelm to draw up the main lines of the future treaty, the Czar stated that our alliance with France did not exclude her joining the new combination.

The last sentences of the letter referred to the Doggerbank incident, which according to the Emperor's wish would be examined by an international commission.

Emperor William's reply concerning the alliance between Russia, Germany, and France, only arrived on November 2. It was written in English and on six pages of foolscap, bearing the Imperial Arms. This is the summary of the contents:

"Alliance purely defensive, exclusively directed against European aggressor or aggressors. America must not consider that alliance as a threat against her. Two parties exist in France. (1) The Radicals—anti-Christian who have leanings towards England ('Old Crimean traditions'), but who are against war. (2) The Nationalists—clergy who do not like England, sympathize with Russia, but who do not want war either. On the whole France wants first of all to be neutral. England counts on that. Mr. Rouvier, the Finance Minister in France, said last December that France would not on any account support Russia against Japan, even if England were to unite with the Empire of the Rising Sun. To be assured of France, England gave her Morocco. All will change when France will have to decide openly for London or St. Petersburg. If you and I stand shoulder to shoulder, the result will be that France will be obliged to unite formally and openly to us and fulfil her duty as ally towards Russia. This is of the highest importance to us in view of her excellent ports and her splendid fleet which will thus be at our disposal. If we succeed I shall keep the peace and you will have a free hand to negotiate with Japan. I sincerely admire your sublime political instinct which prompted you to request the Tribunal of The Hague to judge the incident of the North Sea. That incident, intentionally muddled, was exploited by the French Radicals, Clemenceau and all the others, as a proof that France is not obliged to fulfil her

obligations as ally to Russia. According to my information, Delcassé and Cambon have entirely adopted the English point of view in that affair and France has adopted a kindly attitude towards England.¹

I enclose with these lines the projected agreement. No one knows about it, not even my Minister of Foreign Affairs. It was all done by me and by Bülow."

The letter ended with the following :

" Möge Gottes Segen ruhen auf dem Vorhaben der beiden hohen Herrscher und die mächtige dreifache gruppe—Russland, Deutschland and Frankreich—für immer Europa den Frieden bewahren helfen das wollte Gott."

(" May the blessing of God rest on the intentions of the two High Potentates and may the powerful group of three—Russia, Germany and France—always help to maintain the peace of Europe. May God grant it.")

Count Lamsdorff drew from the Emperor's opinion that we should act with the greatest prudence concerning this proposal. The Emperor William evidently wishes to know the agreement that we have with France with the intention of causing trouble between us. In any case, the Franco-Russian alliance being secret, we must reveal none of our engagements without the consent of our ally. " That is true," replied the Emperor, " prepare a reply to the Emperor William on these lines." The reply was sent to Berlin a few days later.

Long before the end of the Russo-Japanese War America entertained the hope of one day acting as intermediary between Russian and Japan. It was evidently towards this end that she conceived the idea of convoking the second conference of The Hague.

On November 10 the American Ambassador at St. Petersburg called at the Foreign Ministry with an official invitation for the Imperial Government to the International Reunion. Our reply was evasive. Washington was made to understand that not having wished for war, we would cease willingly, but on certain conditions: the fulfilment of

¹ As was seen above this was false.

the demands which we had laid down in the beginning of the year ; a monetary contribution and a contribution of ships ; the occupation of a Japanese port, or an island, until full payment of the contribution ; no interference by the Mediator Powers in the negotiations.

Meanwhile the war continued and we were totally without news from Port Arthur, which was besieged and could not communicate with the outer world. At last on the 3rd November (16) four telegrams were received. The news contained was rather alarming : great destruction by the bombarding ; a considerable loss of men ; scarcity of ammunition ; and outside help was impatiently awaited. The besieged in Port Arthur had little news from Manchuria since September 20, but the troops were nevertheless in excellent spirits. General Stoessel had been wounded in the head but still commanded. All the forts had been mined ready to be blown up in case of necessity.

On November 12, Baron Romberg, German Chargé d'Affaires, called on Count Lamsdorff to make known the following, confidentially. Wilhelmstrasse had learned by diplomatic means that the Japanese, greatly weakened by the war, were considering peace, and had even begged the intermediary of England, who had agreed with France to propose to Germany a triple mediation. Count Bülow did not wish to undertake anything without previously knowing what, in this event, Russia was inclined to do. Count Lamsdorff replied that he could scarcely believe that France had come to any agreement with England without informing Russia, that this news seemed hardly credible.

On November 15, the Kaiser again returning to the attack, telegraphed to the Emperor Nicholas :

" From reliable source in India I am secretly informed that expedition '*à la* Thibet' is being quietly prepared for Afghanistan. It is meant to bring that country once and for all under British influence, if possible direct suzerainty. The expedition is to leave end of this month. The only non-English European in Afghanistan service, the director of the arms manufactory of the Emir, a German gentleman,

has been murdered, as '*preamble*' to the action! The losses of the Japanese before Port Arthur are, according to my information, fifty thousand men; consequently they are beginning to get tired of the war, as they lose too many men. This has made them ask in Paris and London for mediation and that is why these two Powers let their Press renew the ventilation of the probabilities of their being able to mediate. Japan hopes to get Port Arthur and Manchuria from them by help congress. Am preparing answer to your kind letter, which I trust will meet your wishes. Best love to Alice.

"WILLY."

It is evident that the Kaiser not satisfied with accusing England of planning the conquest of Afghanistan; he also insinuates that France is prepared to back up the manœuvre, which aims at robbing Russia of Port Arthur and Manchuria.

Four days later, on November 19, William II wires again. After having confirmed his preceding information on Afghanistan, he assures us that Japan is desperate at the turn the war has taken, and mortified at their impossibility to obtain a decisive victory. "Their reserves are exhausted, while there is a constant flow of fresh troops from Russia. One Japanese General is reported to have said: 'The soup we have cooked, we must now eat up.' Japan is looking for mediators: Lansdowne is said to have asked Hayashi (Minister in London) what would be the conditions of peace. The demands of Tokio were so excessive that Lansdowne made a very severe remark to Hayashi. The latter pulled a wry face and Lansdowne explained his meaning: "Of course England will take good care that in the mediation Russia will be kept well out of Manchuria, Corea, etc., so that *de facto* Japan will get all she wants!"

The Kaiser adds: "That is the point the British have in their eye when they speak of friendship and friendly mediation." He assured us that France knew all that and sympathized. In compensation the Japanese intended to offer Russia territorial concessions in Persia, certainly far from the Gulf, which the English reserved for themselves. After that news, pointed not only against England but

against France, the Emperor William's wire ended by friendly assurances: "May God grant you full success while I continue to watch everywhere for you." November the 20th arrived from Berlin a letter of the Emperor William dated November 17th, to which was joined the draft of a treaty between Russia and Germany. It was entirely written in the Kaiser's hand.

In this letter the Kaiser advised us straight to touch the most vulnerable point for England and to act on the Afghan-Persian frontier. "For I am aware and informed that this is the only thing they are afraid of, and that the fear of your entry into India from Turkestan and into Afghanistan from Persia, was the real and only cause that the guns of Gibraltar and of the British Fleet remained silent three weeks. The Indian Frontier and Afghanistan are the only part of the globe where the whole of her warships are of no avail to England, and where their guns are powerless to meet the invader! India's loss is the death stroke to Great Britain!" The Kaiser closed his letter with the hope that Count Lamsdorff would receive immediate orders to conclude the treaty.

This was the first time that he was so persistent, not only in revealing British intrigue, but in showing the Czar the absolute necessity of acting against her. If Germany could, through Russia, weaken England, and especially if she could deal her the mortal blow of which the Emperor speaks, his wish would be at last realized. Having no longer any powerful rival, Germany would feel she was mistress of Europe and in attaching Russia to her service her pretensions would then be world dominating. What a tempting perspective for this monarch who believed himself to be God's representative on the earth, and chief of a nation called upon in preference to any other to impose her will on the universe!

On November 22, the Czar discussed the Kaiser's letter with Count Lamsdorff. The Minister found the new proposals in principle acceptable, but he saw a certain danger in the precipitation with which the Emperor William wished

to treat the affair. He was of opinion that the treaty required reflection, and meantime one could sound the French Government.

A propitious occasion presented itself. The French Ambassador had just returned from leave, and brought a letter from the President to the Emperor, which he requested to deliver personally. At that time the French Government was greatly perturbed at the manner in which our squadron *en route* for the Far East took in supplies of French coal, and Count Lamsdorff suggested to the Emperor to profit by the audience of Mr. Bompard to touch upon the subject of the German proposal.

The Emperor could have told Mr. Bompard that Germany was proposing a defensive alliance to Russia; that the Imperial Government found the proposal advantageous, but that they did not wish to accept without having first mentioned it to their ally, who would also find in such a combination considerable advantages. In reality by entering into this new Triple Alliance France would be safeguarded against Germany and against the old Triple Alliance, which would lose its value once Germany belonged to both.

If in spite of such considerations France still hesitated to enter the proposed combine, Russia would have a clear conscience and a free hand. Lamsdorff considered that such a declaration would carry great weight coming from the Emperor personally, but as it could not be made until after receiving the Kaiser's reply it would be preferable to postpone Mr. Bompard's reception by the Emperor until the following week. The Emperor agreed with Count Lamsdorff's suggestions and before leaving His Majesty the Minister repeated his opinion, that it would be more correct and more prudent to inform France beforehand rather than invite her to associate with a combine already realized. The policy of the "accomplished fact" would hurt France and suit the Kaiser's game.

On November 26, the Emperor William telegraphed again to the Czar, thanking him for having resolved to say nothing without his consent to France of the projected

agreement. He was decidedly opposed to France being initiated into negotiations *before* the signature of the treaty and he was afraid that if in that event she might mention it to England—"to her friend if not secret ally"—this might provoke an attack by England and Japan against Germany both in Europe and Asia. "Their enormous maritime superiority would soon make short work of my small fleet and Germany would be temporarily crippled. The general equilibrium would be upset. It was my special wish—and as I understood your intention, too—to maintain and strengthen this endangered equilibrium of the world through expressing the agreement between Russia, Germany, and France . . . a previous information to France will lead to a catastrophe! Should you, notwithstanding, think it impossible for you to conclude a treaty with me without the previous consent of France, then it would be a far safer alternative to abstain from concluding any treaty at all. Of course I shall be absolutely silent about our *pourparlers* as you will be. In the same manner as you have only informed Lamsdorff, so I have only spoken to Bülow, who guaranteed absolute secrecy. Our mutual relations and feelings would remain unchanged as before."

In the forenoon of November 27, the Czar sent this telegram to the Minister requesting him to come to Tsarskoe Selo at six o'clock in the evening. The Minister then gave his Sovereign his opinion of the Kaiser's suggestions. It was as follows: The Emperor of Germany wishes above everything else to conclude a treaty with us, leaving France aside. In doing so he is most illogical. Why should France, who would have every right to be offended at our having kept our negotiations with Germany secret, and then invited her to take part in a treaty already concluded and signed, why should she keep such a step secret? Why should she not on the contrary be more inclined to do so if we informed her of our intentions beforehand in a friendly spirit? The Minister likewise protested very energetically against the obligation which the Kaiser wished to impose, that of notifying a year in advance any desire of withdrawal from the

treaty. It not being a commercial treaty, one could not undertake to withdraw from it at a fixed date. Finally, Lamsdorff acknowledged that after thinking the matter over, he had changed his first idea of initiating France into our negotiations through the intermediary of the Ambassador of the Republic, as His Majesty was giving him an audience shortly which it was better not to postpone any further. As to the Emperor William, Count Lamsdorff advised sending him a few reassuring lines which would be followed by an explanatory letter with full details.

The Czar approved of these suggestions and asked the Minister to draft the letter. On returning from Tsarskoe Selo, Count Lamsdorff dictated to me the projected letter and an explanatory notice to the French Government. The first document was entitled "Analysis of some letters and telegrams from the Emperor Wilhelm" and the second "Notes on the strictly confidential communications which could be sent to the French Government." The two documents, which I copied during the night, were sent to Tsarskoe early in the morning for the Emperor's perusal and final commentary.

The following, as far as I remember, are the main points in the first document. "The intimate ties of friendship between the sovereigns of Russia and Germany and the traditional relations between the two Empires offer a sufficient guarantee of their solidarity and their complete understanding, even without any sealed document whatsoever. It is more difficult to associate France in the measure in which her association seems desirable. The German Emperor believes that France has leanings towards England and may even be her secret ally. That supposition is certainly not confirmed by proof positive that we have on the views of our ally. The German Emperor thinks that to bring the French Government to bear a moderating influence on Britain, we should reveal the existence of a treaty formed and concluded between Russia and Germany.

"We think, on the contrary, that in order to bring France to make common cause with Russia and Germany, it is

necessary to confide with prudence aims which are essentially defensive and pacific to her. In this design it is desirable that Russia, friend and ally, acting not by intimidation or force, but by persuasion, might initiate and sound France according to the order of ideas divulged in the notes enclosed. Such preliminary steps, if taken with necessary precaution, would only lead France to keep our secret. Such would not be the case if she were asked to conform to a treaty already drawn up and signed without her knowledge. That kind of take or leave treatment might easily throw her into the arms of Britain. We consider that the best means of getting her to accept the plan so admirably conceived by the Emperor William would be, first of all, to attract her amicably to the general idea of that great political scheme and to familiarize her later with all its details."

The reasons of the notes were: "The unfriendly and even overbearing attitude which the British Government, supported by a biased Press and public opinion, adopt more and more frequently towards the other Powers, suggested to the Emperor William and myself the fear that the peace of Europe might be suddenly broken by some insignificant incident. So as to avert such a danger we consider it useful to conclude an agreement *exclusively defensive*, which would assure the two neighbouring Empires reciprocal solid support (the union of the forces of land and sea) of the one if the other were attacked by a third European Power. An agreement of this kind, of which the details would have to be decided, would seem to us a useful if not a unique "break" against the pretensions of England. We did not, however, wish to put this plan into practice before having in the first instance communicated it to France and having proposed her association.

"This triple agreement, the immense importance of which would be greatly enhanced by present circumstances, would create a political situation which would certainly not be unfavourable to France. It would serve at the same time to strengthen that peace which Russia and her ally wish to maintain in Europe, not only in their own interest,

but in the interest of the whole of humanity. The obligation of *absolute secrecy* is quite evident."

His Imperial Majesty completely approved of the points detailed in both documents and he wrote a letter on these grounds to the Kaiser which left for Berlin on December 7. It crossed one from the Kaiser, which reached St. Petersburg on December 9. It was the military Feast of St. George. After the traditional ceremony at the Palace, the Emperor summoned the Minister, who found His Majesty very excited and he immediately read the letter just received aloud.

The Emperor William put great stress on the agitation that the English were raising against Germany with regard to the coaling of our Baltic Squadron. He added that although he did not wish to hurry our reply to his proposal of treaty, he had to insist on being guaranteed that he would not be left without assistance in case England and Japan declared war on him for having supplied our fleet with coal. If he did not receive a formal assurance that in the event of war, Russia would fight with him "shoulder to shoulder," he would be obliged, to his great regret, to immediately stop providing our squadron with coal.

It is quite evident that there was every reason to be anxious in the face of such persistence which did not hesitate before threats or anything else to make trouble for Russia, not only with England but especially with France, her friend and ally. After some discussion the Emperor decided to wire to Berlin that the two letters had crossed *en route* and that his contained all the necessary explanations. On December 11 the following telegram was sent by the Kaiser :

"Your letter of the 7th for which best thanks, has just crossed mine of same date. We must *now before all* come to a permanent agreement about coaling question. This question becomes *daily* more and more urgent. To-day again serious news has reached me from Port Said and Cape Town ; there is now no time to be lost any more. No third Power must hear even a whisper about our intentions

before we have concluded the convention about the coaling business, the consequences otherwise would be most dangerous. I, of course, place full reliance in your loyalty.

“WILLY.”

To this telegram the Emperor Nicholas replied at once that he agreed to come to an understanding about the coaling question without delay and that Count Lamsdorff was to see Count Alvensleben. The same day the German Ambassador gave Count Lamsdorff a memorandum where he said that England accused Germany of infringing neutrality in furnishing our fleet with coal, and if Germany were to continue the supply she had to be certain that Russia would give her armed assistance if she were attacked by Japan, or by Japan supported by England (*casus foederis*). In giving this “help to memory” the Ambassador requested a reply as soon as possible. He obtained full satisfaction, as next day Count Lamsdorff told him that the Imperial Government promised formally to make common cause with Germany, if she were attacked by Japan or England for having supplied Russia with coal. This promise was given all the more easily as no one believed in any such eventuality. The Ambassador Alvensleben seemed quite satisfied. Count Lamsdorff thought however that the Kaiser would not be quite as pleased, although it would be difficult for him to doubt such a formal declaration by the Emperor, without unmasking his real intention. As soon as the question was decided, the Emperor telegraphed personally to the Kaiser, who replied on December 21 :

“DEAREST NICKY !

Sincerest thanks for your kind letter and two telegrams as well as for your kind order regulating the coaling question ; of course we are unable to-day to foresee whether the declaration given by your Government will prove sufficient to meet every kind of complication which may arise out of the present run of affairs. It is not, however, my intention to press upon you any solution which might appear undesirable to you. We shall under all circumstances remain true and loyal friends. My opinion about the

agreement is still the same, it is impossible to take France into our confidence before we two have come to a definite arrangement. Loubet and Delcassé are no doubt experienced statesmen, but they not being Princes or Emperors I am unable to place them, in a question of confidence like this one, on the same footing as you, my equal, my cousin, and friend. Should you therefore think it imperative to acquaint the French Government with our negotiations *before* we have arrived at a definite settlement, I consider it better for all parties concerned to continue in our present condition of mutual independence and of the spontaneous promotion of each other's ends as far as the situation will permit. I firmly trust and believe that the hopes of our being useful to each other may be realized, not only during the war, but also after it, during peace negotiations, for our interests in the Far East are identical in more than one respect. I wish you and Alix with all my heart a Merry Xmas and Happy New Year, and may the Lord's blessing be on you all, not forgetting the boy. With sincerest love to Alix, believe me, dearest Nicky, ever your most aff-te and devoted cousin and friend,

"WILLY."

THE year 1905 began in a very sad way. Our constant defeats in Manchuria were causing throughout the whole Empire a revolutionary movement. It is no longer a matter of doubt that these tendencies were encouraged by German intrigue and German gold. The same criminal game which the Germans played during the Great War of 1914 was going on in a small way in 1904. Those lines were already written when I came across an article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, January 15, 1923, the author of which, who only signs three stars (***), undertakes to reveal, on the authority of authentic documents, the German intrigues in Morocco in 1905-14. He speaks of "a vast political organization in Morocco conducted with remorseless method," of which the members were suddenly arrested by Marshal Liautey at the Declaration of War in 1914, and their archives were seized. Amongst the numerous documents quoted by the author there is one which mentions the dispatch of cartridges by a Hamburg firm. It runs: "I send you in first instance goods of the best quality, such as we have just dispatched, 3,000,000 same quality *to the East*." The author draws the following just conclusion. "As one is looking for and wishing for war one foresees that it is necessary to cause trouble with our ally of Russia, where he sends in turn arms and munitions to the Russian revolutionaries."

The first sign of revolution began early in 1905. January 22 was a fatal day. From early morning one felt there was something in the air. But the crucial moment was reached when a procession of workmen, headed by Father Gapon, carrying holy pictures and the portrait of the Czar, was stopped in front of the Winter Palace. In several quarters

of the town shots had been fired at the workmen, and they had also been driven back by the cavalry. From the windows of my rooms in the Foreign Ministry I could see the infantry firing from the Pevtchesky Bridge, from the Strogonoff Palace, and the Admiralty Square. It was pitiful to see these people, men, women, and children, just curious on-lookers who had nothing to do with the demonstration, being shot down like sparrows.

It was dangerous to walk in the streets, some of which were barricaded, as were the bridges over the Neva which united the town with the outskirts. It was only in the evening that I could venture out, and that with a special pass given me by the commander of a detachment of Cavalier Gardes who were sent to protect the Ministry in the event of an attack. I went on foot to a friend's house, that of the Wassiltchikoff, who lived quite near on the Admiralty Quay. The Prince Wassiltchikoff was commander of the Corps of the Guards, several units of which had taken part in repressing the disorders during the day. To reach the quay one had only to cross the large square of the Winter Palace. Its enormous electric lamps shining down on the white snow, it was completely deserted that night save for the horse patrol who crossed it to pass along the quays.

On January 24 Count Lamsdorff was at Tsarskoe Selo for his weekly report. Their work over, the Emperor asked him if the "siege of the Ministry" had been raised. The Minister replied frankly: "Your Majesty does not know and cannot imagine what a sad and serious incident it was, that the blood of poor innocent people was shed, whose only fault was that they had been misled by their leaders. They had been told by them that they had permission to come to you with their grievances, and they came in full confidence. They had no bad intentions; the proof of that is they were carrying your portrait with the holy icons. Instead of being listened to by Your Majesty, as they had been told they would, they were received by a salute of artillery fire. The feeling of anger is so great that you

alone, Sire, can soothe them by words of consolation and compassion. No one will believe that being within a stone's throw of the capital you were ignorant of what was going on. The Government is at present helpless. Your Majesty has deigned to raise the hopes of the people by your promises and declarations, which have not been fulfilled. Consequently we, your ministers, are without authority over the people, they no longer trust us. Happily the people still love you and have the greatest confidence in your person. I beg of you let some words of consolation and peace reach them from the Throne. Tell them that you regret what has occurred, that you sympathize with them in their losses, that you will punish those responsible for leading them astray, and take under your gracious protection those who wish to work."

This prayer had its effect on the Emperor, as after touching on other matters he came back to the subject again, saying that he preferred that his name should not be mixed up in this affair. Lamsdorff insisted courageously that only the personal intervention of the Emperor could remedy the wrong that had been done. As a result of this interview on January 26 an official communication was published. It was a kind of compromise between the ideas of the Emperor and those of Count Lamsdorff.

The Minister's ideas were expressed by Messrs. Kokovtzeff and Trepoff, "by order of the Czar," but not in the way in which Count Lamsdorff had intended, nor could they produce the effect he had wished.

Towards the middle of March our Ambassador in Paris, Mr. Nelidoff, sent a memorandum to St. Petersburg which contained all the arguments in favour of peace with Japan. These made an impression on the Emperor, and Mr. Nelidoff was asked to enter into secret negotiations with Mr. Delcassé and to find out what, in the event, would be the conditions demanded by the Japanese. We, on our part, categorically refuse the payment of any indemnity, the restriction of our right to keep a fleet in the Pacific, or the concession of even an inch of Russian territory.

Mr. Matunine, of the staff of Admiral Abaza, published in May a collection of documents relating to recent events in the Far East which were extracts from the archives of the "Special Committee." "Edited by Imperial Command," as was said in the preface, this book, quite incomplete in one way, in another reproduced apocryphal documents which neither the Minister of Foreign Affairs nor Admiral Alexeieff had ever seen, amongst others the text of the treaty with Japan drawn up by Abaza. Published as a manuscript the collection in question was distributed to the Ministers, members of the Imperial Council, to the gentlemen of the Emperor's suite, Governors in the Provinces, etc.

Admiral Alexeieff in a state of indignation called on Count Lamsdorff, saying he intended going to the Emperor to explain. The Minister approved of this step and, saying he would prepare the way, he advised him to ask for an audience without delay. It was the first time that the Count had had such a long conversation with Admiral Alexeieff, and the latter said, after they had fully discussed matters: "What a pity we had not previously known each other and talked openly as to-day. How many misfortunes might have been avoided and how many intrigues foiled. Russia would not be in the dreadful plight in which she finds herself to-day."

This conversation took place on May 17, the day after the news reached us of the disastrous naval combat of Tsoushima, when we lost our fleet and Admiral Rojdestvensky was wounded. Count Lamsdorff knew in what frame of mind he would find the Emperor and decided not to mention the manuscript, so as to avoid adding to his troubles.

The Count, however, found a propitious moment at his interview with the Emperor and broached the delicate subject. When Alexeieff and the Count had explained the real character of Matunine's book, His Majesty was indignant at the abuse made of his confidence. He wished to forbid the circulation, but the Minister was opposed to this step and added: "This book completely exonerates my Ministry from blame. I cannot admit, however, that it should cast the slightest shadow on Your Majesty's prestige."

Meantime the position of our armies in Manchuria became daily more perilous. Our last hope was in the fleet that Admiral Rojdestvensky was bringing from Europe. On May 16 (29) we learned of the irreparable disaster of Tsoushima. It was a most propitious moment for the accomplishment of the German Emperor's designs. On August 30 the Czar, residing then at Peterhof, had just received Count Lamsdorff's report. It was about half-past seven, a manservant came in to light the lamps (there was no electric light in the Alexandria Palace). His Majesty drew a paper from his desk, saying : " I have something to communicate to you, Count. If I have not done so before this it was because I had given my word of honour." The paper which he held was the too famous treaty that the Emperor William had made him sign surreptitiously during an interview at Björke on July 11 (24) past.

The history of that interview is too instructive not to be given in detail. Understanding the Emperor's character, the Kaiser knew that, to attain his end without fail, he had to act on him personally without the interference of his Ministers. For that reason he insisted on having a private code with the Emperor and, as we have seen, he made an extensive use of it. His secret telegrams were continually completed by long autographic letters in which he touched upon various political subjects for the most part too delicate and too risky to be treated by ordinary diplomatic means. Sometimes even the Kaiser made use of the relations which united Prince Henry of Prussia to the Russian Imperial Family. This Prince was married to the Empress Alexandra's sister. In 1904 he came on a visit to Tsarskoe Selo where his wife, the Princess Irene, was already visiting her sister.

In a secret correspondence with his brother the Emperor, Prince Henry mentioned the extreme weakness of the Czar's character who, he said, was always of the opinion of the last comer who spoke to him. This determined the Kaiser still more to act his way with the Emperor and with the idea of doing so he manœuvred his visit to Björke. To eliminate any official character that might be attributed to it, he

proposed to come without his Chancellor and that the Emperor should also be unaccompanied by his Minister of Foreign Affairs. He did not, however, exclude the presence of the two naval ministers, under pretext that the interview would take place at sea.

But to return to August 30 and the Emperor's description of the Kaiser's visit. "After a long conversation, solely on family matters, the Kaiser took me aside and began to prove to me of what grave importance to the general peace it would be if Russia and Germany were to sign an agreement under which they would aid each other mutually in case of European complications. He then asked me to sign a paper which he had there, already prepared. Seeing nothing unacceptable for us in this, I consented. As there was no Minister of Foreign Affairs on the spot, the Emperor called Mr. Tchirschki who was on board as his diplomatic secretary. He arrived with a large portfolio under his arm and it was he who countersigned the Kaiser's signature at the foot of the paper. The second copy which I have was copied by my brother, the Grand Duke Michael, on a sheet of paper with the heading of my yacht *Standart*. My signature was countersigned by Admiral Birileff who was there. Although it had not been stated that the agreement was a secret one, the Emperor begged me to say nothing to anyone about it until the signing of peace with Japan. It is for that reason that I did not tell you sooner. Now the Emperor William begs me to make our agreement known to the French Government."

The Emperor handed the document to the Minister. Astounded at this news, Count Lamsdorff begged His Majesty to give him time to find a way out of this terrible difficulty. Without mentioning the means to which the Kaiser had resorted to obtain the signature of his "Imperial friend," it was quite evident that the treaty was aimed against France, our ally. Having failed in the preceding year in his insidious intentions, thanks to the intervention of Count Lamsdorff, the Kaiser thought this time to carry his point without fail.

Knowing that the Emperor took his usual cruise in Finnish waters, he suddenly telegraphed his intention of joining him, begging that the interview should be of a strictly private nature. Following up the conviction that to succeed you must act on the spur of the moment, without allowing your adversary any time for reflection, he had the document already in his pocket. The Emperor was so taken by surprise that, no one being at hand, the Grand Duke Michael had to act as his copyist. The command to secrecy had been so emphatic and the whole affair so rushed, that even the Minister of Marine, who countersigned the Czar's signature, did so without being aware of the contents of the document. For years I kept in the most secret ministerial archives that little sheet of paper, with the heading of the Imperial yacht, on which, in the Grand Duke's handwriting, were copied the four articles of the agreement between the two Emperors. Directed against France, of no advantage to us, the treaty was only in favour of Germany.

The first article ran : " In the event of one of the two Empires being attacked by a European Power, his ally will support him with his entire naval and land forces." From this we may conclude : In the event of war between Germany and France, for instance, over affairs in Morocco, always the bone of contention between the two countries, Russia would have to make common cause with Germany against her ally.

This advantage assured, Germany gives us nothing in return. The treaty stipulated that help was to be given in Europe. If Russia were in danger of war it was not in Europe but in the East, where Germany was under no obligation to come to her assistance. Directed against France and England, the Björke agreement put Russia entirely at Germany's mercy, as it was very certain that France would never consent to join the treaty and our credit there would suffer immeasurably. The most tragic part of the affair was, that the engagements signed by the Emperor at Björke were diametrically opposed to those which bound us to France.

The origin of the latter dated back to 1891, when, under the reign of the Emperor Alexander III, the foundations of our entente with France were first laid. It was in the month of August, 1891, that Mr. Laboulaye, then French Ambassador at St. Petersburg, on his return from a holiday, came to Mr. Giers with the first suggestion of a Franco-Russian Alliance to counterbalance the Triple Alliance, just created by Bismarck between Germany, Austria, and Italy.

With the consent of the Emperor Alexander and the French Government, these negotiations concluded by an exchange of notes between Messrs. de Giers and Ribot, then President of the Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs of France. Mr. Ribot's note, written in his fine handwriting, was kept in the secret archives of the Pevtchesky Bridge, and it only contained two articles. These stipulated that the efforts of both Powers were to concentrate on preserving peace, but in the event of one being attacked, the other would lend armed support. In 1893 this agreement was completed by a secret military convention, signed by the two Head-quarter Chiefs, Generals Obroutcheff and Boisdeffre. The military convention stipulated the number of troops to be raised by each of the two Powers in case of need and also stated the conditions of mobilization and fixed other technical details.

At his accession the Emperor Nicholas was unaware of the existence of this treaty, but was at once informed by Mr. Giers of our obligations towards France. At his first reception of the Ambassador of the Republic His Majesty gave him a formal assurance that with the change of the reigning sovereign nothing would be changed in our policy towards his country. Since then more than once the Emperor had occasion to prove his fidelity to the entente, which a few years later was cemented into an alliance.

The first occasion was while President Felix Faure was staying at Peterhof. Later during His Majesty's visit to Paris and Chalons in 1896. In 1899, when Mr. Delcassé came to St. Petersburg, there was with the Emperor's consent a new exchange of letters between the French

Minister and Count Mouravief, our Minister of Foreign Affairs. There was a written stipulation that all the diplomatic agreements of 1891 and 1893, as also the military convention of 1893, remained in force. Later, in 1901, at Compiègne the Emperor Nicholas in person confirmed their validity. Again the visit of President Loubet to Tsarskoe was made in view of strengthening this alliance, which France considered a rampart against Germany. With all our previous promises what a flagrant contradiction was this document signed at Björke ! It might have been ignored still longer by the Minister of Foreign Affairs had not the Emperor William begged the Czar to initiate the Government of France. The eventuality of that initiation had been provided for by the Article IV of the agreement. On returning from Peterhof with the treaty of Björke in his portfolio, Count Lamsdorff confided to me all that had just taken place, and asked me to bring him the " dossier " of the secret Franco-Russian Alliance.

He then spent the greater part of the night in preparing a note for the Emperor, summing up all the motives which forbid our ratifying the Björke pact. At the same time a despatch was drafted for Mr. Nelidoff, our Ambassador at Paris. The two documents were approved of by His Majesty and a special courier was sent to Mr. Nelidoff to apprise him of the position of affairs. On account of his long experience, it was left to him to judge whether the French Government could be approached as to her taking part eventually in the treaty of Björke.

The contents of that document were more or less as follows :

" Your Excellency knows how deeply our Imperial Master values the relations, so happily established since 1891 with France, our friend and ally. Your activity as Ambassador has greatly contributed to cement these relations. While considering the ties which unite Russia to France as the invariable basis of her policy, our Imperial Master, faithful to the principle that the two Governments consult each other on all questions bearing upon the general peace,

believes that under the present circumstances it might be desirable for the common good to establish an entente, *strictly* defensive, between certain great Continental Powers, thus to safeguard them from the attack of another European Power. Our Imperial Master is persuaded that in spite of late friction between Germany and France, the German Emperor would welcome France as party to such an entente with Russia and Germany. This is a delicate matter, which can only be broached after most carefully feeling the way in Paris, to ascertain if such a union would appeal to the French and what form it should take."

In his reply of September 11 Mr. Nelidoff absolutely discouraged the idea of broaching the subject mentioned to France. This reply was at once dispatched to the Emperor at Transund, who returned it without any commentary. Count Lamsdorff on the following day wrote a very frank letter to the Emperor. He said that, in his opinion, it was impossible to promise one and the same thing simultaneously to two Governments, whose interests were diametrically opposed. He drew the Emperor's attention to the danger presented by such close relations with Germany, whose only idea was to make us quarrel with France and then swoop down on us. To give his idea more force the Minister enclosed in his letter two parallel copies of the first article of the two agreements: the one with France dated December 14, 1893, and the other with Germany, July 11, 1905.

Some days later the Emperor said to the Minister: "I did not consider the treaty of Björke from your point of view. When I signed it I did not think for a moment that my agreement with the Emperor William could be directed against France. Quite on the contrary, I always had in view to associate France."

The Minister replied without hesitation: "Sire, this treaty is a violation of the promise given by the Emperor Alexander III: to give military support to France, precisely in case of war with Germany. The French, on learning of the existence of this German agreement, would have every right to accuse us of betraying her. I have no personal love

for the French but I cling to our alliance with them as a counterbalance against Germany. As soon as the Germans hear of their entente with Russia, they will be the first to announce it to France, to prove us to be their unfaithful allies. The Emperor William is much more anxious to cause discord between France and ourselves, than to have the support of our army, which is busy in the Far East, or that of our fleet, which is at the bottom of the sea."

"No!" answered the Emperor. "No! the Emperor William is certainly sincere." Nevertheless, His Majesty asked the Minister what was to be done with regard to the Björke agreement. "It is stipulated that the agreement," replied the Count, "will only come into force after our conclusion of peace with Japan. As this has not yet been done, Your Majesty might write personally to the Emperor William that you are attempting to bring France into the pact, but until their consent is obtained, you find it impossible to fulfil the obligations contained in the act signed at Björke."

Two days after the Minister sent two documents to Tsarskoe, which the Emperor had requested him to draft. The first was entitled "A few considerations to which the Emperor of Germany's attention might be drawn"; the second was "The draft of a letter to Mr. Nelidoff, our Ambassador in Paris."

The first ran approximately as follows :

"Within a very brief delay the exchange of the ratifications of Portsmouth, which will definitely conclude peace between Russia and Japan, will take place. As was decided, from this moment the agreement between Russia and Germany, previously signed at Björke, comes into force. Given the grave importance of that agreement, it is desirable to confirm it in establishing exactly the obligations imposed by it and in indicating the best way of loyally fulfilling them. The traditional friendly relations between Russia and Germany do not require any documentary confirmation. It is, however, necessary to get the coalition of France, the friend of England,

with this defensive alliance between the two countries, thus to create a new Continental Triple Alliance, the result of which may exceed our expectations.

"It follows that the project of associating France to the new alliance, drawn up at Björke, is of grave importance. If the Republic refuses its coalition, the Article IV of the Björke arrangement becomes invalid, also the Article I must then undergo an important alteration, given the stipulations of that Article, as it now stands, would no longer refer to other European Powers alone, but also to France, the ally of Russia. During the interview at Björke the documents signed by the late Emperor Alexander III were not at hand. These established the exact nature of the allied relations between France and Russia and excluded all possibility of hostility between them.

"The steps taken to ascertain if the French Government would consider a coalition with the Björke agreement have shown that, on the contrary, such a proposal would meet with insurmountable difficulties. It has also proved that it is absolutely necessary to avoid haste, as also the slightest hint of violence, in broaching this delicate question. In the contrary case France might divulge the secret proposal, and pass openly over to the enemy. In view of the above statements it is necessary to postpone putting the Björke agreement into force, until such times as France's opinion may be obtained on the matter. Should she categorically refuse to join, then enters the possibility of reforming the agreement in question, to conform with the obligations towards France undertaken by Russia since the formation of the Triple Alliance."

To Mr. Nelidoff the following letter was sent :

"While our Imperial Master recognizes the justice of some of the personal remarks of your Excellency, His Majesty finds nevertheless that we must try to bring the French Government to agree to the idea of a defensive alliance with Russia and Germany, an alliance which would only be to the advantage of our friend and ally. The more one wishes an agreement to be binding, the greater the effort to strengthen it, and give it the form most appropriate to present circumstances. We have no wish to renounce the

principles of our Alliance of 1891-93, but we cannot ignore the almost complete change in the political situation of Europe since then. When the famous League of Peace—the Triple Alliance—directed against France and Russia was created, we had to agree to ward off the dangers threatening us and we signed agreements which have efficaciously preserved us during fifteen years. To-day the Triple Alliance is nothing more than a historical souvenir, and Germany, then apparently the chief aggressor, begs to associate with us in forming towards a defensive end the only group of Continental Powers capable of withstanding British aims, now brutally confirmed in the new Anglo-Japanese Treaty.

“It would seem quite as desirable for France, friend and ally, as for Russia to reform their agreement in the sense indicated by present conditions of the world’s policy. To review does not mean to destroy, but rather to improve, to strengthen. The only danger of attack really threatening France comes certainly from Germany. Would it not then be more prudent, more intelligent to take the means to avoid such a danger, with the help of a defensive alliance, associated with Russia, secure at all events on that side.

“But the Paris Cabinet may have scruples on account of the ‘entente cordiale’ with Britain. With regard to that, you could easily make it clear that the ‘entente’ could exist perfectly well with the defensive agreement with Russia and Germany, but that the latter would certainly be of more practical value.”

The letter closed with a repeated request prudently to bring France to associate herself with this strictly defensive alliance with Germany and Russia. As soon as the French Cabinet would give her assent the terms of the agreement could be debated.

These two documents received the Emperor’s approval. The same day another letter from Nelidoff reached us declaring once again the absolute impossibility of getting France to enter into the Björke agreement. A letter from Count Benckendorff from London by the same mail was written in the same strain.

The Kaiser, however, did not consider himself beaten,

and in reply to the Emperor's letter he insisted rather angrily that "What was signed was signed." Count Lamsdorff was then commanded to draft another article which would complete the Björke Treaty, and annul all that it contained incompatible with the Franco-Russian Military Convention. The new text was followed by a declaration that as France refused to join the Björke agreement, Russia had no reasons for abandoning her ally, but wished to stand by the treaty which the Emperor Alexander III had signed.

Between times two letters from Mr. Nelidoff of October 2 and 5 announced that Franco-German relations had become very embittered, and Mr. Rouvier had categorically refused to consider any agreement with Germany. Count Lamsdorff then decided to find some means of disengaging the Emperor from these obligations which the Kaiser had forced upon him. Count Osten-Sacken having left Berlin two months previously, and as he was ignorant of the negotiations being carried on, the Count suggested privately acquainting him with the matter. While explaining the situation to the Ambassador, he tried at the same time to suggest to the Emperor the means of withdrawing from the unfortunate treaty.

After describing the event in detail Count Lamsdorff continued :

" At the time of signing this agreement the end of the Russo-Japanese war did not seem to be imminent ; we quite expected to have time to prepare France for her entry into this political combination. Unhappily, of late events have not tended to draw France and Germany together ; and we can scarcely hope that the former would entertain the idea of the projected triple association. On the other hand Russia has no motive for thus suddenly abandoning her ally, nor can she force her hand. Time, perseverance, and tact are required if her influence in this delicate matter is to be efficacious. The realization of Article IV of the Björke agreement is neither within sight nor at all certain. It is nevertheless quite evident that the whole meaning of the treaty depends upon it. The ' entente '

of three Continental Powers represents a greater force than an agreement between two Powers who, if the secret were not scrupulously kept, would find themselves isolated, and by that would involuntarily contribute to the coalition of the others.

"Our Imperial Master realizes, just as the Emperor William, that what is signed, is signed. At the same time His Majesty finds that natural loyalty imposes on Russia the duty of respecting what was signed during the late Emperor Alexander's reign. This cannot be arbitrarily annulled by a stroke of the pen. After the signing of the Portsmouth Peace Treaty, while this act was not yet ratified nor in force, our Imperial Master wrote to the Emperor William stating the impossibility of obtaining the immediate consent of France to join this alliance. The completion of this treaty should then be postponed until the consent of France be obtained or the Articles I and IV reformed. To-day our Imperial Master addresses another letter to the Emperor William.

"Given all the reasons above, and to allow Russia to keep her engagements towards Germany with perfect loyalty, and without altering the text of the Björke agreement, she is obliged to add to it the following declaration: 'In view of the obstacles preventing the immediate adhesion of the French Government to the defensive treaty signed at Björke the 24th July, 1905—adhesion provided for by Article IV of the said treaty—it is understood that Article I of that act could not be applied in the event of a war with France and that the mutual engagements uniting the latter country to Russia shall be wholly maintained until the establishment of a triple agreement.'"

This document was not copied, but sent to Count Osten-Sacken requesting its return after perusal. This was done, so no trace of it remains in the archives of the Imperial Embassy in Berlin.

The last letter with regard to the Björke agreement is dated 28th November. The Emperor William mentions having read certain passages to Bülow of the Czar's last letter. The Chancellor was of the opinion that as our alliance with France was offensive it was in no way opposed to the defensive agreement proposed by the Emperor

William. Since then the Pact of Björke was never mentioned between the two Emperors and when, in 1907, the two Sovereigns met at Swinemünde, neither the Emperor William nor the Chancellor alluded to it. Later I shall have occasion to speak of the Swinemünde interview.

In his *Memoirs* Count Witte, who was an intimate friend of Count Lamsdorff's, did justice to the courage which he displayed in foiling the Emperor William's intrigues, and the devotion he showed towards his Sovereign, in enlightening him and freeing him from the engagements he had signed. Although Count Witte appreciates the rôle of Count Lamsdorff at its proper value, he greatly exaggerates his own part in this affair. He mentions having been invited by the Emperor to discuss the political situation created by the Björke agreement, and states having contributed successfully at annulling the same.

At that time I was too closely connected with current affairs to have ignored this, had it really been the case. It seems all the more improbable as the Emperor did not care for Witte and he would not have consulted him on such a delicate question, for which there was no special cause. I know for a fact that, on returning from America, Count Witte called on Count Lamsdorff to learn what had taken place at Björke. The Minister to a certain extent gave him his confidence. He spoke of the pitfalls prepared by the Emperor William, and the manner in which he thought he had foiled his manœuvres. This intimate friendly conversation took place long after the decision to annul the Björke agreement had been taken.

I can mention other inexact statements in Count Witte's memoirs relating to the same event. In speaking of the interview between the Czar and the Kaiser at Swinemünde, which took place in the summer of 1907, he says: "In 1905 (†) the two Emperors met again at Swinemünde and I was told by the Chief of our Headquarters that, although there was no written treaty concluded, the two monarchs assured each other mutually of their intention of acting according to the spirit of the entente of Björke!" (p. 384).

Later I will give the details of the interview of Swinemünde at which I was present, and I have every reason to believe that Count Witte was deceived by his informant, who was evidently ignorant of the facts. It is, as will be seen, precisely at Swinemünde that the decision to annul the Björke agreement was taken.

The pitfall of Björke was far from being the only one of its kind in the relations of the two Sovereigns. More than once the Kaiser tried to take the Emperor Nicholas un-awares, and to thrust his will upon him. It will be remembered that such were his proceedings in 1897, when, as the guest of the Emperor at Peterhof, while walking together in the park, he quite suddenly asked him to give his consent to Germany's occupation of a Chinese port. Much later, in 1910, when the Emperor Nicholas came to Berlin alone to assist at a family gathering without his Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Kaiser extorted his consent to send a German General to Constantinople. Then his aggressive manner towards his "Imperial friend" at the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908, and in 1914 at the famous ultimatum of Austria to Serbia.

All these unworthy actions produced quite the opposite effect on the sensitive character of the Emperor Nicholas than that intended by the Kaiser. It is on account of such proceedings that the Kaiser never succeeded in gaining the sympathy and confidence of him, whose friendship he wished to gain at any price, either by ruse or by force.

I cannot close the chapter on the Björke interview without adding a few personal remarks. There are some who have been inclined to accuse the Emperor Nicholas of duplicity in all that took place during that interview. There could be no more unjust or unpardonable error. There must not be the slightest suspicion of duplicity attached to the Emperor's memory.

Did he not say himself to Count Lamsdorff: "I did not believe, for a single instant, that my agreement with the German Emperor could be directed against France." On the other hand, have we not heard Count Lamsdorff, who

had to struggle so hard against the Emperor William's intrigues, indignantly refuting any want of loyalty on the part of the Czar and in reply to Count Witte saying: "Certainly His Majesty was aware of the engagements undertaken by Russia towards France, but not having the documents at hand, and harrassed by the Emperor William, he could not exactly remember their contents."¹

The loyalty of the Emperor Nicholas is above suspicion, but if there are, in spite of evidence to the contrary, still ill-disposed people who would read in the historical page of Björke that which it does not contain, let them think of the tragical end of that Emperor Knight, who preferred to seal with death his fidelity to his engagements rather than accept the freedom offered him by Germany.

Not wishing to interrupt the thread of the story of the Björke interview, I have almost reached the end of the year 1905. I must retrace my steps a little to speak of our war with Japan, of the mediation offered by America, and also the events taking place in the interior of Russia during the negotiations between the two Emperors. These negotiations were closely connected both with our military situation and the interior state of the country.

After the Tsoushima disaster our military failures continued. Yielding to America's ever-growing desire to play a part in the world, President Roosevelt decided to offer his mediation.

In May the Ambassador of the United States at St. Petersburg, Mr. Lengerke-Meyer, telephoned requesting me to arrange an interview with the Minister without delay. He had, he said, a message from the President which was as urgent as it was important. On being received by Count Lamsdorff, he said that he had been commanded by President Roosevelt to seek an audience of the Emperor, in order to give him personally the President's letter with a proposal of mediation.

I must acknowledge that I personally considered it unjust

¹ Count Witte's *Memoirs*

that the Americans who, in their own affairs were bound by the Monroe theory, should interfere in matters outside their own country. It also pained me that Russia, so great and powerful, should be invited to enter into peace negotiations with Japan, just at a critical moment when their efforts and resources were perhaps at the point of exhaustion.

It appears that such indeed was the case. Ill-luck followed us in that unfortunate, unpopular war. In fact, on July 28, 1904, the date of the naval battle between Admirals Togo and Witthoft, the Russian squadron began to retire at a moment when the Japanese, seeing that further resistance was beyond their strength, were just preparing to give the signal for retreat.

It is said that the psychological state of the Japanese at the time of the American offer of mediation was similar to that of Admiral Togo on July 28, 1904. However, in high circles it was decided otherwise, and the American proposal was favourably received. The Minister lent a willing ear, and the Emperor graciously received the Ambassador Meyer. The consequence was the Conference of Portsmouth.

Count Lamsdorff suggested confiding peace negotiations to Mr. Witte, who was not then in office and who was tired of forced idleness. The Emperor had no objection to this, and preparations for his departure were proceeded with.

During the conference the Minister was daily kept in touch with his negotiations with the Japanese. He wired the full details of each meeting. Considering themselves victors, the Japanese at once put forward their financial and territorial claims, to which the Emperor wrote on one of Witte's telegrams: "Not a kopeck of Russian money, nor an inch of our territory."

I have already said that the moment for entering into negotiations was not propitious, but having once accepted the mediation, we had to take the consequences of such a decision. Witte's part was not an easy one, and public opinion has not always been just towards him. The explanation of this may be found in an offended national pride very comprehensible. It was really difficult to resign oneself to

the idea of having to submit to the demands of the Japanese, whom in the beginning we had been so sure of defeating. I, on the contrary, am of opinion that due recognition must be given to the energy and perseverance with which Mr. Witte defended our interests at the Conference. Eye-witnesses have told me that his inflexibility with the representants of our erstwhile enemies made them furious. At the last assembly of the Conference he peremptorily requested Komura's consent to the demands he had put forward and gave the Japanese twenty-four hours for consideration. "If I do not get the required reply to-morrow," he said, "I have nothing more to do here." The reply was given in the delay fixed.

On 14th October the Treaty of Portsmouth was ratified by the Emperor, who on that occasion addressed a letter to Count Lamsdorff, thanking him for his precious collaboration and expressing the hope that he would long be able to profit by it. As a sign of special attention the Emperor announced his bull on the Feast Day of the heir to the throne.

In the country, after the events of January 9 (22), which have been described elsewhere, things were going from bad to worse. Towards autumn the outlook was very black. In giving details of those troublous times it is not my intention to make history, and I only give the facts and doings such as I collected and noted them day by day. It is for this reason that for some time hence I shall write in the form of a diary and state events without either analysis or commentary.

On October 2, at the funeral of Professor Troubetzkoy, well known for his liberal views, more than one hundred thousand persons took part in a demonstration and singing revolutionary airs along the whole route of the funeral procession. The gendarmes, in attempting to keep order, were repulsed. Red flags were carried through the streets and there were many instances of collision between soldiers and people. The University was protected by the squadrons of the Horse Guards and Cossacks.

On October 3 the printing offices went on strike and the papers did not appear.

On October 7 the Moscow railways ceased working and trouble also broke out in the old capital.

On October 12 St. Petersburg was cut off. The trains on the railway lines of Moscow, Warsaw, Tsarskoe Selo, and Peterhof stopped running, and the Finnish railway was the only means of communication with the outer world. At a meeting of workmen they demanded that all "Intellectuals" should leave the hall.

On October 14 General Trepoff was named Chief of the St. Petersburg Garrison. He sent out notices warning the population that in case of riots the troops would not hesitate to shoot. At the University several meetings were held simultaneously. At the entry to the various auditoriums were posted notices: "Meeting of Jewellers," "Meeting of Students," and even "Meeting of Anarchists." At a given moment the number of manifestants was about fifteen thousand persons. One artillery officer assured them that only the guard would shoot at the people and that the other soldiers would go with the revolutionaries.

At these meetings all was carried out in due form: the chairman, list of orators, etc. Receipts for preparing bombs were given and the overthrow of the dynasty was openly discussed. The Emperor stayed on at Peterhof, and when Count Lamsdorff, finding him one day particularly depressed, suggested that he should come to St. Petersburg and, surrounded by his soldiers, speak authoritatively to the people, he replied "I had thought of that, but that will depend upon circumstances."

During the day of October 15 bands of strikers forced the shopkeepers to close "the Gostinny Dvor," a large market-place in the centre of the capital. They also stopped the work in different administration of the railways, even in the department of the Ministry of Transport. The post and telegraph offices and the gasworks were protected by the military. Communication between Peterhof and the capital was carried on by little boats from the

Admiralty. The trams stopped, and the price of food was doubled.

On October 16 there were neither telephones nor electricity in the town. The principal streets were lighted by projectors or by torches. A shortage of water and gas was feared. The chemists went on strike and those who wished to continue the sale of medicine were looted by the mob. There was anxiety for the foreign embassies. A meeting of fifteen thousand people on the Vassili Ostrow voted for the overthrow of the Romanoffs and proclaimed a Republic. The Governor of Kharkoff was imprisoned, and the Governor of Perm was forced to take part in a procession and to carry a red flag. The Siberian Railway went on strike. The employees from the Ministry of Finance held a meeting. The Ministry of Transport, the Agricultural Bank, and a part of the State Bank had stopped work. The Emperor William organized a regular service of five torpedo-boats and a German cruiser between Memel and Cronstadt "to be of service to the Emperor." In the "Chevalier Guard" Regiment a man who came to the barracks to preach revolutionary propaganda was arrested.

On October 17 Mr. Witte was named President of the Council of Ministers, and the "Ukaz" creating the Douma was announced. On that occasion the people crowded to the Winter Palace and sang the National Anthem. In the streets groups carrying white flags came to blows with those, far more numerous, who were carrying red ones. In the Square of the Kazan Cathedral and on the steps of the Prefecture impromptu orators made very violent speeches, shouting "Down with the Czar!" "We want a social Republic!" Their vociferations met with little response. The crowd was mainly composed of people whose curiosity had brought them there, and was very passive. The orators were feebly applauded, and then only by women and students. The former disguised as hospital nurses walked in procession carrying red flags.

Towards the end of the afternoon, in the Nevsky Prospect, there was some fighting, after which the shops closed and

the crowd dispersed. The Liberals of Moscow complimented the strikers on their success. Thus encouraged, the strikers declared that the strike would continue until the following guarantees were given : A general amnesty, even for political assassins ; national militia, and the Emperor's oath that the Manifesto of October 17 would really be put into practice. A general strike was proclaimed at Helsingfors, where a vote for the separation of Finland from the Empire and the expulsion of the Russian authorities was carried. Mr. Boulyguine, Minister of the Interior, resigned.

On October 22 the Capital almost resumed its normal aspect again. Electric light reappeared, tramways and papers likewise ; no more crowds in the streets. Trains were again running. The measures taken by Trepoff were very efficacious : the Strike Committee countermanded a great demonstration, and the students did not have the requiem in the Kazan Square for the victims of the past few days, as had been their intention. Reason and common sense seemed to have prevailed. A counter-revolutionary movement was started in the south of Russia, and assumed such savage proportions that the clergy intervened to restrain the people.

The fleet was cleared of two or three hundred revolutionary sailors, who were despatched to Cronstadt. Uniting with kindred comrades in that town, they broke loose, burning houses, shooting in the streets, preventing the troops sent from St. Petersburg from landing.

The Government began to yield one point after another. Trepoff was asked to resign, as were the Ministers Hilkoff, Kokovtsoff, Lobko (General Controller). The Grand Duke Vladimir was relieved of his charge as Commander of the Guard Regiments in the district of St. Petersburg. The proletariat threatened to take revenge as soon as they would be sufficiently armed. Maxim Gorki published in the first number of his paper a proclamation on the Communist Republic.

On November 3 the Revolutionary Committee began to take action after rumours of the punishment of the Cronstadt

sailors. A general workers' strike was ordered. The Baltic and Warsaw railways again stopped running. The railway men prevented the trains from starting. The Emperor removed to Tsarskoe Selo.

On November 4 His Majesty presided at a Council composed of the newly appointed Ministers. The Council decided not to declare St. Petersburg in a state of siege, but neither to make any further concessions to the strikers, nor to pay the workmen on strike. It was decided to be firm but not too severe, trusting that the troubles were on the decline.

During the first days of November a political assembly opposed to the Government was held at Moscow. The members of that reunion were divided into two unequal parties. About one hundred, with Goutchkoff at their head, formed the party of the Manifesto of October 17. Opposed to them were two hundred members of that reunion whose programme was infinitely more radical : universal suffrage ; the Jewish question ; close collaboration with the Peasants' Congress, etc. It is well known that these latter, influenced by their leaders, demanded the division of the land and other ultra-radical reforms.

1906

THE year 1906 commenced with preparations for the Douma. The elections over, various political parties were formed. The extreme party accused the Government of not having been sufficiently prepared for the recent conflict with Japan. They especially blamed the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for their non-success in preventing the war which had cost Russia so dearly in men and money, and only receiving in return the bitterness of the Portsmouth Treaty.

Many of these accusations were made in good faith by people ignorant of how things had really taken place. There were others who simply used this means of discrediting the Government to suit their own ends, and did so without any scruple. As yet not daring to be too ostentatious in their propaganda, they began by criticizing the system of governing. They demanded that in future the Government should divide its authority and responsibility with the People's representatives, and it is thus that the first foundation of a representative Government was laid in Russia ; it was also then that the Cadet party (Constitutional Democrats) made their ill-fated entry on to the political stage, later to play such a disastrous game in the fate of their country.

The Cadet leaders openly declared, cynically, that no political concessions could be expected from a victorious Government, but a Government in trouble would be much more amenable. Consequently they did their utmost to create trouble during the Japanese war and to embarrass the Government in every way, causing difficulties which degenerated into revolution.

It was the same procedure as in 1917, and the revolution



THE OPENING OF THE BOULEVARD
AT THE WHITE PALACE, 1906 MAY 1, 1906

of 1905 was only a prelude to the former. When trouble broke out, the Cadets worked still more intensely, always with the same aim, to force the formation of a representative Government. At last they succeeded, and after lengthy deliberations personally presided over by the Emperor Nicholas, in the Palace of Peterhof, the statute of the Douma was drawn up.

Yielding to current public opinion, and influenced by the Emperor William, who did not forgive Count Lamsdorff for having foiled the Björke agreement, the Emperor decided to demand the resignation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and to replace him by some one who would appear before the Douma free from any of the political prejudice of his predecessor.

In the beginning of April His Majesty announced his decision to Count Lamsdorff, at the same time assuring him of his personal feelings of confidence and gratitude, but acknowledging himself obliged to make concessions to public opinion and to appoint another to the important post of director of the exterior policy of the Empire. The Emperor's choice fell on Isvolsky, at that time Minister at Copenhagen.

On his return from Tsarskoe Selo, where his resignation had just been decided, the Minister called his assistant, the Prince V. Obolensky, and me to inform us of the state of things, and asked me to telegraph to Mr. Isvolsky.

Count Lamsdorff was victim of his own honesty and constant devotion to his Sovereign. I have previously shown the continual struggle he had against his political enemies, the Emperor's welfare being always his first and greatest consideration. For those who are unaware of these details, to all appearances the one to whom all the responsibility of the Japanese war and its disastrous consequences are attributed is Count Lamsdorff. But a historian who will impartially peruse the documents can scarcely come to that conclusion. Honest and devoted servant of the Dynasty, Count Lamsdorff carried with him to the tomb the secret of his dissensions with the Emperor and of his

sufferings. He never pronounced a single word to exonerate himself, but preferred to be wrongly accused rather than betray his Sovereign.

He was often criticized for not having left his post when he found his power was on the wane, but in his opinion he could not do so, first of all in deference to the Emperor, but also by so doing he would leave an open field for those pernicious counsellors who had so little the good of Russia at heart and who surrounded His Majesty. His health undermined and morally depressed, Count Lamsdorff did not long survive his dismissal. He spent the summer in the environs of the capital in the Yelaguine Palace, lent him by the Emperor. Towards autumn he returned to town, and in the beginning of winter his doctor advised him to go South. At first his health seemed to improve there, but soon the news reached us that he was worse, and he died at San Remo on March 25, 1907.

As soon as the news of the Count's death was received, one of the Emperor's Aides-de-Camp, the Prince N. Dolgorouky, came to me with His Majesty's command to put the documents left by the late Minister in the archives in order. I opened the cupboards, but the Prince Dolgorouky was only interested in the documents relating to the pre-war period, and he took away all the correspondence relating to that "History of the Far East," as he called it. I never since heard what became of them. As to the other archives of the late Minister, the arrangement of them was entrusted later, by the order of the Czar, to a special commission.

I return now to the moment of the despatch of the telegram to Isvolsky offering him the ministerial post. Knowing him to be a man of very exacting and decisive character and of long date antagonistic to the Central Administration, we were all persuaded that quite naturally he should wish to make his own choice of staff. Our expectations were, however, not realized. He wisely preferred to keep the old experienced workers, and during his Ministry made very few changes. He retained me as

Chief of his Cabinet, and during the five years that he remained at the head of the Ministry, I have only agreeable reminiscences of our relations.

Mr. Isvolsky's arrival coincided with a new era in Russia. Representative government was being inaugurated, and the new Minister, who was of a broad and highly cultured mind, devoted himself to our interior policy. Attached to none of the newly formed political parties, his sympathies were attracted to that of the Octobrists.

His new duties involving his presence at the Empire Council, Mr. Isvolsky joined the central group, the political tendencies of which more nearly approached those of the Octobrists. This group was presided over by Mr. Ermoloff, one time Minister of Agriculture, whose political friends met periodically at his house. Mr. Isvolsky regularly attended these functions, where his wide Parliamentary experience and knowledge of European constitutions was particularly welcome. These discussions were often carried on until the early hours of the morning.

April 26 (May 9) was the date of the opening of the Douma. Mr. Isvolsky's nomination not having as yet been gazetted, he took his place in the procession amongst the Court dignitaries.

The inauguration of the new State Administration took place in the Winter Palace with great pomp and splendour. The Emperor, surrounded by the Imperial Family and the Court, passed from the private apartments through the halls of the Palace to the Throne Room. There he made his speech to "the best men of Russia," as he expressed himself. As Master of Ceremonies my position, being on the elevation which led to the Throne, gave me a perfect view of the whole ceremony.

Very pale and visibly a prey to the deepest emotion, the Emperor spoke calmly and in a clear, distinct voice. When he came to the words "our best men," he laid particular stress on that phrase. All those present were profoundly moved; the Empresses lifted from time to time their handkerchiefs to their eyes.

The ceremony over, the deputies proceeded to the Tauride Palace, temporarily reserved for the meetings of the Douma. In the XVIIIth century Catherine the Great built this superb country residence for the celebrated Potemkine, Prince of Tauride. It is in this Palace, and its immense gardens, that this luxurious favourite, loaded with power and wealth, and like Lorenzo de' Medici, surnamed the Magnificent, entertained His Imperial Protectrice on a legendary magnificent scale. Unoccupied since the reign of Alexander I, the Tauride Palace was arranged to suit the requirements of the new Legislative Corpus.



THE OPENING OF THE DUMA
At the Winter Palace, 17th May, 1906

THE efforts of the new Minister for Foreign Affairs were directed chiefly in 1907 towards arranging closer relations with Japan, our late enemy, and coming to an understanding with England on the question of Central Asia.

Isvolsky was quite alive to the fact that our war with Japan had been brought about by specific causes, and he was also aware that, in spite of our military reverses, public opinion bore no grudge against the Japanese. Consequently he did not repulse the efforts that the latter were continuously making towards an agreement with us, and he opened up negotiations with the Tokio Cabinet, of which the Russo-Japanese Treaty was the outcome.

Another agreement was concluded the same year with England, the first steps towards which, as we have seen previously, had already been made during the period of Count Lamsdorff's office. The aim of these negotiations was to establish with the British Government a "modus vivendi" in the numerous questions of Central and Western Asia, which for years past had been a matter for consideration both for Russia and Britain.

The reciprocal position of the two Powers in Afghanistan, Thibet, Turkestan, and Persia were the objective of this new agreement. Some of these above mentioned, by their geographical position giving access to India, were from time immemorial the sensitive point of Anglo-Russian relations.

This treaty concluded, England ceased to fear the century-old legend of our intention of penetrating into her Indian possessions. She even proposed uniting London with Calcutta by a railway passing through the Caucasus.

The interviews of the Russian and English Sovereigns at Reval in 1908 and Cowes in 1909 corroborated the work of the Diplomats.

Isvolsky has since frequently been criticized for having approached England and thus offended the susceptibility of the Emperor William. It was said that since then the Kaiser felt himself "in a circle," as he liked to express himself, and disturbed at seeing England take the place, which he had long coveted, with Russia.

This charge is quite unjust. In the first place, when he came to an agreement with Great Britain in regard to the thorny questions interesting both Empires, Isvolsky never had in view to impair the traditional ties between Russia and Germany; this is proved by the friendly visits both Sovereigns continued to pay to each other every year and during which they discussed all matters pertaining to world politics.

On the other hand, Emperor William himself stands witness in the denial of the above-mentioned charge. Did he not write to the Czar on June 14, 1906, when he heard of the British attempts to arrive at an understanding: ". . . That settlement concerning Central Asia might do away with many causes of friction *which should make me very happy too.*"

After the agreement was reached, we once more read in his letter of January 9, 1909, to the Emperor: "There have been rumours lately, according to which your agreement with England regarding the questions of Central Asia is said to have troubled and annoyed us; similar rumours have also been spread after the visit Uncle Bertie paid you at Reval. It is all nonsense! We understand perfectly well that just now Russia must avoid any sort of conflict with Great Britain and that it is her duty to mitigate everything that could lead to difficulties. Besides, have you not assured me formally that you should not conclude with England any other agreements of a more general purport. You have given me your word; what else could I desire? No, my dear Nicky, it is neither your agreement with England, concerning Central Asia, nor your interview at



THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS IN GERMAN UNIFORM. SWINEMÜNDE 1907

Reval that caused disappointment and displeasure in Germany ! ”

Had the Kaiser's game been frank and loyal, and had he not been hypocritical in that intimate correspondence, as well as in many other cases—could anything more explicit be expected than the above assurances, insistently repeated before and after the Anglo-Russian agreement, in order to prove that the latter was not the cause of his displeasure ?

But his game was neither fair nor skilful. And, when Russia sought for an agreement with England, she did not do it inconsiderately, but because Germany pushed her for a long time in that direction. Indeed, during a whole century, each time we were having difficulties with Great Britain and needed support, did we ever find Germany at our side ? What did she do for us during the Crimean war ?—Nothing ! What did she do in 1878 ?—This is not even worth mentioning ! And it has always been the same. Through his provoking and arrogant policy, now against France in Morocco, now against Russia in the Balkans, it is Emperor William himself who pushed us towards England. When the newly reached agreement enabled us to settle our own affairs, and when the perpetual antagonism between Russia and Great Britain finally gave place to a friendly understanding between both countries to Russia's great advantage, was it not a good opportunity for Germany, if she was really friendly, to manifest her pleasure instead of taking offence ?

On the other hand, why should Russia, at that time great and powerful, whose friendship was jealously sought after and disputed by the two strongest Powers of Europe, for the sake of pleasing the Emperor William, to forfeit new and advantageous agreements and become the satellite of Germany. The example of Italy, who for years had been sadly following in the wake of the Triplice, or of that of Austria become the tool of Berlin, were neither edifying nor tempting. The epithet of “ Brilliant second,” with which the Emperor William was pleased to dub his allies, might be flattering to Austria, but hardly suitable to Russia.

Criticism after a fact is always easy. It is the case with those who are of opinion that had we accepted a rôle unworthy of a great Power, a rôle proposed to us by the Kaiser, Russia would probably not be in the sorry plight in which she at present finds herself. Such reasoning is not difficult when the events have taken place, but at the time of Russia's greatness, no Russian Minister could have persuaded public opinion of the necessity of such a policy of submission. As proof of what I assert, it is sufficient to recall how bitterly this same Isvolsky was attacked at the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908.

I shall return later to that period, and if I now allude to it, it is only to say that the annexation of these two Provinces, which in reality had been already thirty years under Austrian dominion, could not be compared with the other humiliations to which the Kaiser wished to submit Russia. These reached their culminating point on the day when, over our heads, a brazen ultimatum was hurled at Serbia.

Those who reproach Isvolsky of having brought about the Great War through his agreement with England are showing either their ignorance in the matter of politics, or else their bad faith. Their attitude towards the former Minister is made still more unjust by the fact that it is mostly the same people who, as I have just said, have fallen down upon him, calling him a criminal and a traitor, for not having defended with sufficient energy the Slavic cause in 1908.

It was only on assuming the post of Minister that Isvolsky learned the exact terms of the Björke Pact. If there were still any doubts in his mind as to the Kaiser's intentions the perusal of this document must have dispelled them.

Emperor William's aim was perfectly clear : To destroy the Franco-Russian Alliance, thus to subjugate Russia, and have her on her side in Germany's future struggle with England. All that precedes only affirms, without a shadow of doubt, that our agreement with England was not the real reason of the war to which the Kaiser had long looked forward, and which he had prepared with the utmost care



THE TIME FOR NICHOLAS ON BOARD A GERMAN BATTLESHIP—SWINEMÜNDE, 1905

against us in the event of our non-submission to his capricious demands.

Russia had neither reason nor right to be a party to these German intrigues, to split with France and become a vassal of Germany, which was the way in which the Kaiser usually treated his allies. Had she accepted this humiliating position, Russia would have sacrificed in vain her dignity, her historical mission, and her most vital interests.

The real cause of the war, then, was quite foreign to our agreement with England. The roots were very much deeper and can be traced back to the century-old desire of Germany to use the Slavonic nations for extending her own greatness, to become the first Power in Europe, and then in the world. It was really the struggle between Germanism and Slavism which was the cause of the World War. The economic rivalry between Germany and Britain was a secondary reason.

In a personal letter from the Kaiser to his friend Ballin, dated December 15, 1912, one finds the following passage, which fully confirms this assertion: "The Slavonic subjects of Austria had begun to agitate, to calm them it was necessary for the whole Monarchy to assume an energetic attitude towards Serbia. If we are forced to draw the sword, Germany wishes that it would be to help Austria not only to push back Russia, but to escape from the Slavs and remain German. . . . We could not be saved from this *Racial Struggle*, because the future of the Habsburg Monarchy and that of our country were in jeopardy." It was then a vital question for the Germans in Europe.

While working for German supremacy in Central Europe, the Kaiser, with his usual boastfulness and duplicity, refuted the accusation as "ridiculous," saying: "*We are Central Europe*," and "There is no European equilibrium!" "I am European equilibrium, I and my 25 corps of which I can double the strength the day the war breaks out." (Eckhardstein, *Ten Years at the Court of St. James*, p. 192.)

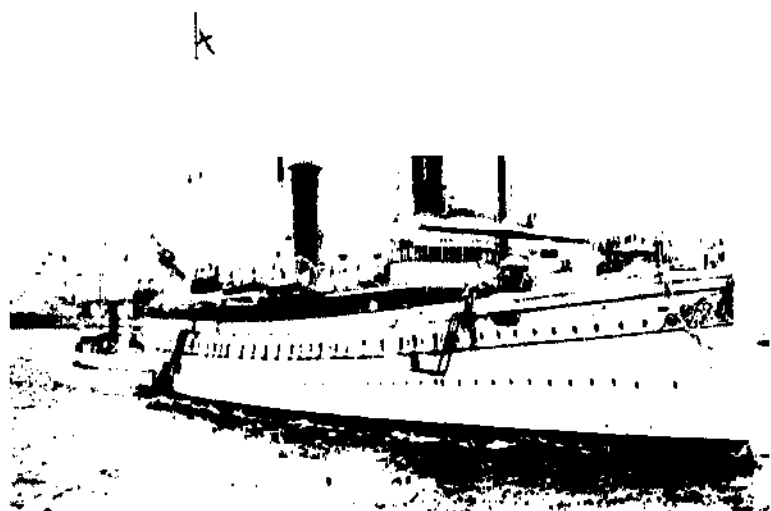
For a clearer understanding of that principle of Race, which from time immemorial had been the principal pivot

of German policy, let us take our lesson from History. We must recapitulate to that end, if only in a few words, the relations between Teutons and Slavs during past centuries.

Since time immemorial of the foundation of the Teutonic Order (1128) the Teutons have gradually advanced towards the East Slavia. They migrated successively from the borders of the Rhine to the Weser, the Elbe, the Oder, the Vistula, and the Nieman. Under the Moscovite Princes they brought their intellectual influence to Russia, and from the time of Frederick the Great they inaugurated their systematical method of the colonization of Russia. It is thus that we see them settling first in Volynia, in Podolia, then on the borders of the Volga, finally in the Caucasus, and even in Transcaucasia. Since the annexation of the Baltic Provinces, and thanks to consecutive marriages of the Russian Emperors with German Princesses, Germans acquired a preponderating influence at the Court of the Czars, and in the high administration of the Empire. Although Russian subjects, they for the greater number remained German in soul and sentiment and faithful servants of the German cause.

These few summary details show us how the natural tendency of Germany was always in the direction of the Slavonic people, whose national characteristics offered the least resistance. Since the accession of William II the famous "Drang nach Osten" became the chief pivot of his policy. But his appetite developed, and he was no longer satisfied with Russia. With the aid of Austria he conceived the plan of penetrating the Balkans to Constantinople, and even as far as the Persian Gulf.

The ancestors whom the Kaiser respected and esteemed in particular were the Grand Elector, founder of Prussia; Frederick the Great, creator of Prussian greatness, and William I, founder of the German Empire. Taking his inspiration from these predecessors of his, imbued with the idea that he was the representative of God on earth, and convinced that the people he governed were called to dominate the universe, the Emperor William wished to achieve the



century-old work of his ancestors in entirely subjugating the Slavonic world, Great Russia to begin with.

Russia would not submit. Time after number she proved her peaceful and conciliatory spirit; more than once she had been more yielding than her dignity allowed, but there was a limit to her patience which the Kaiser's boundless arrogance was one day to exceed. To a Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Isvolsky or another was left the choice of action: to yield to Germany and facilitate her struggle with Great Britain, her only serious rival, and allow her to become Mistress of Europe, or keep our independence and, uniting with Britain, defend Russia and the Slavonic world against the Germanization which threatened it.

Another Russian Minister, seven years later, when the situation was infinitely more serious, acted in a similar manner. He preferred to bear the horrors of compulsory war than to yield. And, strange contradiction, all Russia's interests tended towards the preservation of the traditional friendly relations with Germany. These relations, which not only would have been maintained, but might even have been transformed into the alliance long wished for by the Kaiser, had he played his cards better. If, in his personal relations with the Emperor Nicholas, he had not continually hurt the pride and Russian patriotic sentiment, he would have certainly accomplished his aims, and had he not persisted in his endeavours with such impudence, not wishing to understand that Russia would never submit to such treatment.

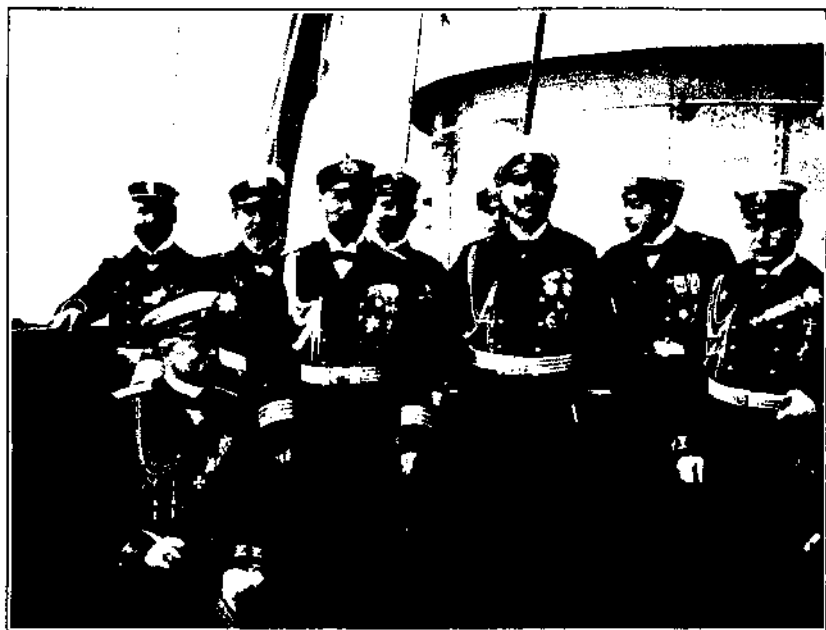
Returning to the question of the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907. Without doubt it could have been durable and would in no way have interfered with our old relations with Germany, were it not for the want of good faith of the Kaiser. Obsessed and tormented by the idea of "Enclosure," seeing his intrigues constantly foiled, failing in his aims, he was displeased and irritated. Often he went so far as to show his bad humour, now with Russia, now with France; the latter he could always annoy on the question of Morocco. Nevertheless he did not cease coquetting with France, nor

fail to be on the best terms with the Emperor Nicholas whom he met every year.

Thus at the end of July they met at Swinemünde. As that interview followed closely on our agreement with England the Kaiser wished it to be a most brilliant one. To that effect, he assembled the whole Baltic fleet, and during three days made the most magnificent display, causing reviews and manœuvres to alternate with shooting exhibitions. In the evening the harbour of Swinemünde was a blaze of light. Illuminations of all kinds presented a delightful spectacle.

The second day of the interview coincided with that of the Empress Marie's nameday, July 22. The whole squadron was beflagged from early morning; in the evening the Imperial yachts and vessels of the fleet were one blaze of light and the magnificent fireworks were visible as far as Stettin. The meeting of the Sovereigns and the intercourse of their Ministers was intimate and friendly, and no allusion was made to the Björke agreement; *tacito consensu*, both parties behaving as though it had never taken place.

I recall how after our departure from Swinemünde, Isvolsky, taking my arm as we paced the deck of the *Standart*, said: "My dear friend, if Count Lamsdorff were still of this world, he would have rejoiced seeing the fruits of his labour. He would have had the feeling that what he had done was good work: neither the Emperor nor the Chancellor even alluded to the Björke agreement, which may now be considered as definitely buried." These words were very significant from one who never professed any particular friendship for his predecessor.



IN the spring King Edward came to Reval to pay a visit to the Emperor Nicholas. It is well known the active and personal part which he took in general in the affairs of State and particularly in foreign politics.

The idea of the Anglo-Russian agreement which had just been signed had been his entirely, it was he also who had facilitated its realization. As a proof of his satisfaction and likewise wishing to corroborate the new Entente in the eyes of the world, King Edward wished to meet the Czar. Arriving with Queen Alexandra and a large suite on the Royal yacht *Victoria and Albert*, the King spent two days in the harbour of Reval. The English Royal couple were met not only by the Emperor and the Empress Alexandra, but by the Dowager Empress, who came on her yacht, the *Polar Star*, to see her sister.

Towards autumn Isvolsky requested the Emperor's permission to go abroad. His intention was to get into personal touch with the various European Cabinets in order to discuss the question of the freedom of the Straits. The existing laws were very disadvantageous to Russia, and it was the Minister's purpose to make some changes and improvements.

The first stage of his journey was Vienna. He accepted the invitation of Count Berchtold, Ambassador of Austria-Hungary at St. Petersburg, to spend a few days at his country house. At Buchlau Castle he found Count Aehrenthal, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, and a very select society.

On leaving St. Petersburg it was arranged that I should meet the Minister at Paris towards the end of September, while at Buchlau he was accompanied by Mr. Demidoff, first Secretary of our Embassy at Vienna. Consequently I

was not present at the interviews, but later Isvolsky confided to me the gist of those conversations which were to have such grave consequences in the future.

I was, however, to be closely connected with all the perturbations which followed the Buchlau interview and the correspondence exchanged on that occasion between the Czar and the Emperor Francis Joseph. The Buchlau conversations were interpreted by the Russian and Austrian Ministers in a totally different manner.

Isvolsky, invited on a visit to "friends," thought it possible to discuss certain questions of the moment in an academic fashion without his words taking the character of obligations, or official promises of a nature binding to his Government. The Austrians considered the matter from quite another angle. They wished on the contrary to take advantage of this visit and gave an official stamp to an exchange of friendly views.

When smoking their after-dinner cigar, Isvolsky touched on the question of the Straits; the idea of their liberation was most favourably received by those present, who assured him that on their part it would meet with no opposition, especially as they had a slight favour to ask. This related to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The fact was that, according to the new rule proclaimed the preceding year in Turkey, all the Provinces under the protection of the Sultan, consequently Bosnia and Herzegovina likewise, were to elect and send deputies to the Parliament at Constantinople. Having taken full advantage during thirty years of the mandate issued to them by the Congress of Berlin, to administer these two Slavonic Provinces, Austria had no desire that the Turkish elections should remind the world of their dependence on the Porte.

Count Aehrenthal was, on the other hand, visibly anxious to mark if possible by some notable act his stay at the Ballplatz and at the same time to add a little lustre to the inglorious reign of the old Emperor. It was with that intention that he asked Isvolsky, as though in passing, what he would



say if circumstances were to force Austria to proclaim the annexation of the two Provinces in question. Chiefly preoccupied by the question of the Straits, Isvolsky replied that for his part he did not see any obstacle, but that the mode of procedure would have to be considered. In saying this Isvolsky thought they were only exchanging friendly ideas, while his questioner registered his answer as an official consent and acted on it without awaiting a definite reply from St. Petersburg. This did not deter them from declaring later that the annexation had been carried out with Russia's consent.

It is evident that, contrary to all the laws of hospitality, his hosts had decided to set a trap for the Minister. The manœuvre succeeded, and to show their satisfaction Count Berchtold had a commemorative plate fixed on a wall of the Castle, with the date of the "conversations of such major importance to Austria, when Isvolsky gave his consent to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina."

According to agreement, Isvolsky arrived in Paris in the second half of September ; I was already there. He immediately got into touch with French statesmen, politicians, foreign diplomats, journalists, etc. I took up my duties as Chief of the Cabinet, and every morning and evening I joined the Minister in the office put at his disposal by the Ambassador.

On the morning of October 5, amongst the documents deciphered during the night, there was a telegram from Sofia. The news contained was that Bulgaria would proclaim her independence after having previously come to an understanding with the Austrian Government, who intended announcing the same day the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It came as a bolt from the blue and Isvolsky could scarcely control his indignation. He immediately began to plan the steps to be taken, and decided to put forward in opposition the promise given him at Buchlau regarding the liberty of the Straits.

He broached the matter with Mr. Poincaré, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, after which he started for London,

hoping, because of the recent agreement of 1907, to try and persuade the English to change their point of view on the stipulation of the Treaty of Paris. In this he did not succeed. He came back to Paris dissatisfied with the result of his voyage. English statesmen emphasized the fact that the question of the Straits was an international one, that could only be modified by common accord amongst the Signatory Powers of the Treaty of 1856. Isvolsky then decided, before returning to St. Petersburg, to stop at Berlin, see the Emperor William, and speak with the Chancellor on the question of the annexation of the Provinces of Slavia and on the question of the Straits.

While the negotiations for the Berlin visit were going on, Mr. Nelidoff gave a dinner at the Embassy, followed by a reception, in honour of the Minister, to which all Paris was invited. As the visitors arrived the host was standing to receive them in one of the first reception-rooms. Mr. Isvolsky was with him; they were talking together with Mr. Clemenceau, then President of the Council, when Count Kevenhuller, the Austrian Ambassador, was announced. As he entered, Mr. Clemenceau, in his usual impetuous manner, rushed over to him and said in a loud voice audible to all present: "I say, will you soon have finished setting fire to the four corners of Europe?"

Taken suddenly by surprise at the unexpected and unusual form of address, the Ambassador was too taken aback to reply. Next day Mr. Clemenceau's saying was in every one's mouth, which showed how the measure adopted by the Vienna Cabinet with regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina was resented by the public.

What was difficult to understand at the time and has since often been the subject for criticizing Aehrenthal in Austria was, that in annexing the two provinces, he had lost sight of the traditional point of view of the Vienna Cabinet on keeping Sandjak of Novi-Bazar as a buffer between Serbia and Montenegro. He thought perhaps in that way to diminish the bad impression which he knew the annexation could not fail to produce. That is the only

plausible explanation, as the question of Sandjak had been until then, one of the cardinal points of Austrian policy in the Balkans.

Later, when I was already Minister at Stockholm, one of my colleagues, Mr. Dumba, who had prior to that been for several years at the head of the Balkan section at the Ballplatz, and afterwards Minister at Belgrade, told me that the only instruction in principle that the Count Aehrenthal had given him, when sending him to Serbia, was never to allow, under any circumstances whatever, the junction of the Serbian and Montenegrin frontiers. Le Sandjak of Novi-Bazar, which separated the two countries, would, according to the Cabinet of Vienna, prevent the formation of a Serbo-Montenegrin block undesirable to Austria. How Count Aehrenthal could find it possible in 1908 to renounce this point of view remains incomprehensible.

Meantime a telegram from Count Osten-Sacken, from Berlin, informed Isvolsky that the Emperor William, engaged in affairs concerning the marriage of one of his sons, could only receive him in a few days. The Minister took advantage of this leisure to visit his family at Baden-Baden and, on inviting me to accompany him, suggested that we should then return together to St. Petersburg.

At Berlin we stayed at the Embassy. On the day of our arrival Isvolsky had an interview with the Chancellor Bülow and Mr. de Schoen, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The next day we were invited to lunch with the Emperor and the Empress at the "Great Castle" (Grosses Schloss). The guests were few in number and consisted of persons of the more intimate circle of their Majesties: viz. Count Eulenburg, Grand Marshal of the Court; General Adjutant von Plessen, Commander of the Military Throne of the Emperor; General Lincker, Marshal of the Court; Countess Brockdorf, Lady-in-Waiting; Count de Pourtalés, Ambassador at St. Petersburg, with the Countess, certain aides-de-camps. Neither the Chancellor nor Count Osten-Sacken, our Ambassador, was present at the luncheon.

At table the conversation was general; after lunch the Empress and the ladies retired to the drawing-room. The Emperor and gentlemen went into the smoking-room and Isvolsky hoped that a political conversation would follow; he made several attempts to begin one but was met each time by obstinate silence on the part of the Emperor. Still trying to lead the Kaiser on to the wished-for topic, he remarked casually that the Emperor would scarcely recognize St. Petersburg, so much had the new government changed its political physiognomy. William replied drily, "Oh, I know Petersburg well. I think it is beautiful, especially the quays." Other attempts of the Minister to put the conversation on a business footing met with the same result: each time the Emperor cut him short.

We had scarcely finished our cigars when General Mirbach came to announce that before retiring the Empress wished to take leave of her guests. The Emperor begged us all to come to the drawing-room where, after the Empress had taken leave of us, he bade us good-bye too, without having proffered a single word on politics. On going downstairs, Isvolsky, rather annoyed, said to me, "Did you notice how the Emperor avoided talking business? It was done intentionally. I shall go straight to the Chancellor to make the position clear and find out what I must expect."

The fact was, that in coming to Berlin, Isvolsky had still hopes of persuading the Germans to refuse their sanction to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as it was neither compatible with the Treaty of Berlin nor with our agreement with Austria signed at Reichstadt in 1879. I tried to dissuade the Minister from going to the Chancellor, considering that visit useless and humiliating—and indeed, in view of Court discipline, what could the Prince Bülow say when the Emperor had intentionally so ostentatiously emphasized the private character of his reception, neither inviting the Chancellor, the Minister for Foreign Affairs nor our Ambassador. Everything had been well thought out and it was quite evident from the attitude of the Kaiser that his decision was taken.

As will be seen I was not mistaken, but Isvolsky would not give up his intention of calling on the Chancellor ; he dropped me at the Embassy and went on to the Wilhelmstrasse. As might have been expected, the Chancellor avoided giving a reply and all that he would promise was to try to speak with the Emperor during the day and take his commands.

We dined that evening at the Bülow's. After dinner Isvolsky took his host aside, who was obliged to admit that he had been unable to see the Emperor during the day. Decidedly from a political point of view the visit had been a fiasco. Isvolsky realizing this felt very discouraged, especially as he had found neither in France nor in England the support he had expected. His discouragement was greatly increased by the news from the President of the Council of Ministers at St. Petersburg, who informed him that Russian public opinion was greatly incensed at the idea of the annexation of the Slavonic Provinces and that not only the Douma and the Council of Empire, but the Council of Ministers demanded explanations which it would be well for him to tender on his immediate return. It was the day after the dinner at the Chancellor's that I found Isvolsky with this letter in hand, which had considerably upset him.

Our work over, he asked me to go out with him. Almost immediately he began to complain of the difficulty of his position with the unfavourable criticism of public opinion immeasurably increased. Under such conditions, he said, it was impossible for him to continue at the head of affairs and on his return he would ask the Emperor to relieve him of his present functions and give him a post as Ambassador. In a friendly way he asked me what, in that event, would be my intentions and greatly advised me to "give up the game" and likewise ask for a post abroad.

During the day Isvolsky heard from Prince Bülow that Germany, being an ally of Austria-Hungary, would feel very embarrassed to disoblige her in the question of Bosnia-Herzegovina, but that the definite reply of the Berlin Cabinet would be given by Count de Pourtalés who was shortly

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returning to his post. Isvolsky left Berlin very dissatisfied with results. The rest is known.

On his arrival at St. Petersburg Count de Pourtalés called at the Ministry to announce that, in view of the Alliance with Austria-Hungary, his Government not only fully supported the Viennese Cabinet in present circumstances but also in future promised complete solidity in any policy which that Cabinet considered opportune. That attitude of the German Government, personally inspired by the Emperor William, was only vengeance on his part for the position adopted by Russia towards her ally France during the Moroccan crisis and the period which followed Björke.

Received on his arrival by the Emperor, Isvolsky had no difficulty in proving to his sovereign that all that had taken place at Buchlau was misunderstanding, abuse of confidence, and cunning on the part of the Austrians. He even succeeded in obtaining the Emperor's signature to a letter, written on these lines, to the Emperor Francis Joseph to which the latter sent a lengthy reply, evidently dictated by Count Aehrenthal, and containing amongst others the following sentence: "When your Minister for Foreign Affairs gave us assurances, my ministers could not admit that he was doing so in his own name and not in that of the Imperial Government and without your authorization."

After that exchange of letters the correspondence between the two Sovereigns lost its previous intimate character and even their relationship suffered. When the following year the Emperor was leaving for Italy from the Crimea, he gave orders that the journey should be arranged in such a way as to avoid passing through Austrian territory.

Isvolsky was perfectly correct in predicting that on his return to Russia his position would be more difficult than ever. It was indeed so; the discontent was general, and the attacks of the Press and the Chambers had never been so violent.



THE FUNERAL RITES OF THE GRAND DUKE ALEXIS, BROTHER OF THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER III
NOVEMBER 1900

UNNERVED by this state of things the Minister took a short leave in the month of April. The pretext for this was a slight operation in the arm which he had to undergo at Munich.

Just then Count Cassini, then Ambassador in Spain, sent in his resignation. When taking leave of the Emperor, Isvolsky begged his Majesty not to dispose meanwhile of the vacancy of Madrid, suggesting that possibly on his return it might prove an honourable solution for himself.

Seeing that the Minister's position was becoming more and more difficult and precarious the Emperor promised to comply with his wishes. As we drove to the station Isvolsky related his conversation with the Sovereign, begging me to keep it secret, adding : " In resigning Count Cassini renders me a great service, as the post of Madrid is the only one which suits me at the present moment. You know I am a man of discipline, and that at whatever post of Ambassador, even the most active, I should strictly conform to the Ministry's instructions, but after the part I have played in the political life of Europe, I would always be accused of personal aims. While in Madrid it will be possible to avoid taking any part in affairs. I shall write my memoirs and quietly await the time when in a few years perhaps my services may be again required."

On leaving, Isvolsky asked me to arrange for the despatch of diplomatic documents to Munich, begging me at the same time to add any observations and personal remarks which could be of interest to him. I despatched several couriers, and in one of my private letters I described my impressions of the Court on May 6, the Emperor's Feast Day, where I assisted as Master of Ceremonies at the Palace. Every

situation contains its intangible atoms, but especially Court surroundings. It is a straw which shows which way the wind blows. On May 6, I felt by various, almost imperceptible signs, that the atmosphere had changed and changed to Isvolsky's advantage. I was approached by some as to when the Minister intended coming back; others expressed the hope that he was not leaving his post; others again declared it inadmissible that the Emperor should be accompanied the following summer, on his voyage to England, by a new Minister, etc.

All those considerations, wishes, reflections expressed by those in close proximity to the Emperor decided me to write that evening to the Minister: "You will find great changes when you return. I do not think your Madrid plans any longer possible." I was right. The day after his return Isvolsky was received in audience by the Emperor, who asked him to give up the idea of leaving, but remain at the head of the Ministry and accompany him on his official voyages to France and England.

As things then stood Isvolsky no longer wanted me to give up my post as Chief of the Cabinet, as he had proposed in Berlin, and he asked me frankly to renounce the idea of a foreign career for the present, saying: "Believe me, you will not lose anything by not going abroad; throw in your lot with mine with confidence." There was nothing left for me but to bow my acceptance, and it was thus I remained almost two years longer in the Ministry.

During the following summer and autumn the Court was going to travel a great deal. First came the reception of the Emperor William at Reval on June 4 (17), then came the journeys to Sweden, France, England, the Crimea, and Italy.

The visit of the Kaiser lasted two days and differed very slightly from those of preceding years.

The trip to Sweden was full of new and interesting impressions. After two days at sea we found ourselves one beautiful sunny morning in the Swedish fjords. Since then, as Minister at Stockholm, I have often taken that

wonderful route, but the first impression was most unexpected. The fjords are granite rocks and islets dotted over the sea on approaching the Swedish coasts, and forming a kind of archipelago. Boats have often to navigate between the rocks through narrow channels through which it would at first appear they could scarcely pass. At the time of year of our voyage the fjords were covered with that beautiful emerald green which is the peculiarity of northern vegetation. Here and there were dotted coquettish little villas, whose owners came out smiling to wave a welcome to the Imperial yacht. After two or three hours of this novel sailing we caught sight of Stockholm. The Swedish capital stands high and appears to rise straight out of the waters.

The *Standart* dropped her anchor in front of the Royal Palace, a beautiful specimen of architecture, built by Tessin in the XVIIth century. Their Majesties were received with great pomp. A rowing boat, with a canopy as in the time of Gustave III and rowed by sailors dressed in uniforms of the same period, hailed the Imperial yacht and rowed the Royal visitors to land. There the King, Queen, and Royal family were waiting to receive them and they then went on foot to the Palace. Sentries in the uniform and three-cornered hats of the time of Gustave Adolphus were posted at the entry of the old Castle and the head of the staircases. Their Majesties were lodged in the Castle. The elegance of the Court of Sweden is well known, and the State dinner given the same evening was in the traditional exquisite style.

The next day was Sunday, there was mass on board the *Standart* and their Majesties came from the Palace to assist at Divine Service. The Emperor, seeing me on deck, beckoned to me, and giving me a portrait of the Czarevitch (then four years old) with an autograph inscription, he requested me to deliver it to Sven Hedin, the explorer. This Swede of Hebrew extraction had for some considerable time enjoyed marks of special attention from the Czar, who was greatly interested in his expedition to Thibet.

His Majesty had given orders to the authorities of Turkestan, to always give him every assistance in his journeys and to put at his disposal military escorts and other indispensable means of circulation. In fact the success of Sven Hedin's explorations were, in great part, due to the interest shown by the Emperor, who received him every time he came to St. Petersburg.

If I have dwelt rather at length on this unimportant personage, it is to show in what manner he requited the Czar's kindness. Two years had scarcely elapsed when he published a pamphlet entitled "Warning Ord" ("A Word of Warning,") in which he spared neither the Emperor nor Russia. The Emperor was represented as a blood-thirsty tyrant, whipping his subjects to death, while the greed of Russia was such as to terrify the Swedes into the belief that Russia, their historical and natural enemy, might swallow them up entirely in her expansion towards the ocean. It was said at the time that Hedin in writing his pamphlet was guided from Berlin. When, much later, as Minister at Sweden, at a reception by the Emperor, I alluded to the behaviour of Sven Hedin towards His Majesty and towards Russia, the Czar then recalled with indignation the incident of the Czarevitch's portrait.

After Mass their Majesties, with the Swedish Royal family, lunched on board the *Standart*, then the yacht set sail for Tolgarn, a summer residence of King Gustave's, situated on the borders of Lake Moelar. It was here that according to programme the last day of the interview was to be spent.

This castle is not far from Stockholm, about two or three hours by car, but owing to its size the Imperial yacht had to take a roundabout route which took more than ten hours to accomplish. I took advantage of the remainder of the day to visit Stockholm, where I little thought I should live one day.

About midday next day I reached Tolgarn by car. The time was spent pleasantly in the beautiful park near the lake in various amusements. After dinner their Majesties took

leave of their royal hosts and it was a beautiful white night, such as one sees in such latitudes, when we weighed the anchor.

This visit of courtesy was not entirely void of political character. The question of the Aland Islands was the subject on the carpet. It is known that according to the terms of the Treaty of Paris in 1856, Russia promised that these islands, although forming part of the Russian Empire, would not be fortified by her. Half a century had elapsed since these conditions had been imposed on Russia and Isvolsky found the moment propitious for liberating her from this servitude. The Swedes, however, were very susceptible on this matter and determined to keep the *status quo* which guaranteed the security of their capital within cannon shot of the islands.

This question was of such importance to them that the preceding year King Gustave, who had come to Russia to assist at his younger son's marriage, spoke privately to the Emperor about it. Later he wrote to His Majesty begging him not to raise the question of the Islands at least for the present. The Emperor gave him his word, and Mr. Isvolsky reiterated that promise at Stockholm to Count de Trolle, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom.

Shortly after returning from Sweden, the Court began preparations for the voyages to France and England. As their Majesties were again accompanied by the family and a large suite, the *Standart* was escorted this time by the *Polar Star*, another Imperial yacht. On board the latter were Isvolsky, Prince Belosselsky-Belosersky, general Aide-de-Camp; Count Hendrikoff, Grand Master of Ceremonies; General Mossolof, my colleague Demidoff and myself.

In the Baltic Sea the weather was calm, but the North Sea was most inhospitable and it grew worse and worse as we approached the Channel. In view of the length of the voyage the itinerary was arranged to allow a margin in case of unforeseen delay. Thanks to that, in entering the Channel towards the end of the third day, we found we were greatly in advance of the hour fixed for our arrival at Cherbourg,

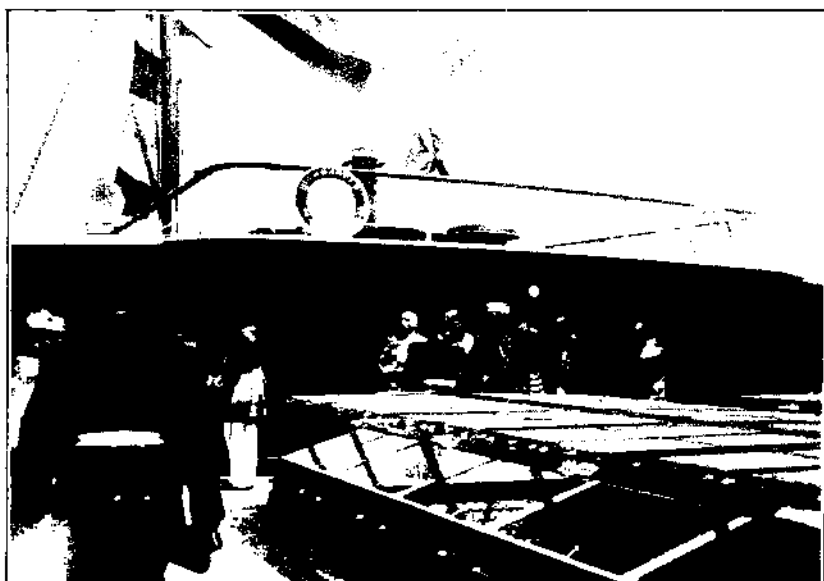
consequently we dropped anchor in the middle of the Channel and spend a dreadful night, of which every one felt the effects.

At Cherbourg salutes were exchanged and then followed the visits between the Emperor and President Fallières. His Majesty reviewed the admirable French Squadron, which thanks to Mr. Delcassé, then Minister of Marine, was in such perfect condition. The welcome given us by the French was, as always, cordial and splendid.

On leaving Cherbourg the Imperial yachts approached the English coast where King Edward awaited the Emperor at Cowes. After the first formalities of the reception, the English King invited the Emperor with his suite on board the yacht *Victoria and Albert*, to assist at one of the greatest naval displays ever witnessed. The spectacle of this formidable array of strength was overwhelming. Disposed in three lines, forming, so to speak, two long corridors, the Royal yacht took more than two hours to pass in front of these iron monsters amongst which the Dreadnoughts appeared for the first time.

With the King on board were Queen Alexandra, the Prince and Princess of Wales (the present King and Queen), Princess Victoria, Princess Christian (King Edward's sister), the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, with Prince Arthur and their two daughters, the Princess Royal of Sweden (since deceased), and Princess Patricia. Amongst the statesmen were the Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith; Sir Edward Grey, Secretary of State at the Foreign Ministry; Admiral Fisher, First Lord of the Admiralty; Sir Charles Hardinge, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; Sir A. Nicolson, Ambassador at St. Petersburg, and the Court dignitaries of their Majesties.

During the review Hardinge, whom I had known for a long time, was standing next to me. Looking with admiration at that powerful fleet, he exclaimed very significantly: "With that tremendous force at sea and your powerful land forces we could impose our will on the world."



Reading from left to right: Tsvetkov, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs (back view); Count Benckendorff, Russian Ambassador in London; Admiral Niloff (back view); Count Fredericks, Minister at the Russian Court (back view); Prince Dolbasselsky; General Mossoloff; Sivinsky, *Chef du Cabinet* of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Dondolo and General Ernoldoff, Military Attaché in London.

After the review, luncheon was served on board the Royal yacht and dinner in the evening, after which the sovereigns chatted pleasantly with their guests. Queen Alexandra, to whom I had already had the honour of being presented at Copenhagen and at Darmstadt, approached me and asked how we had got on in France. I replied that the reception had been magnificent. She continued, smiling: "But you must acknowledge that here it is still better."

During the few days which the Emperor and Empress spent at Cowes, the little town on the Solent, with its charming harbour and picturesque surroundings, wore a very festive air. The houses in the town and all the boats were profusely beflagged; the villas were all occupied and the streets thronged all day with a very elegant crowd. Numerous yachts, having come from all parts of the world for the famous regatta week, were lying in the harbour.

When their Majesties left Cowes, Isvolsky went to London, while I went for a motor tour through Umbria, Tuscany, and Lombardy. I brought this delightful excursion to an end at Venice, where I had been invited to visit the Grand Duke Paul and the Countess of Hohenfelsen. I returned to St. Petersburg about the middle of September.

There I learnt that the Emperor William had not been satisfied with only having seen the Czar at Reval, he had intercepted him on his return from France and England. Coming on board the *Standart* at Brunsbüttel at the entry to the canal, he accompanied their Majesties as far as Kiel. Regiments of infantry were stationed all along the banks of the canal, cheering the Imperial yacht, and a cavalry escort pranced on either side of the vessel, which could not put on great speed in the canal. The Kaiser would not allow the interviews of Cherbourg and Cowes to be the last impression on the public: he must at all costs have the last word. He also probably hoped to learn something of what had taken place at these interviews which were disturbing his peace of mind.

In the second half of September, after having assisted at the manœuvres of Krasnoe Selo which, according to an

ancient tradition, closed the guards' summer military exercises, the Court went to the Crimea, from where the Emperor intended going alone to Italy, to visit King Victor Emmanuel. It will be remembered that the King of Italy had come to Peterhof in 1902 and since then, for various reasons, the Czar had not gone to Italy. Now, beyond the usual demands of courtesy, there were other weighty political reasons for the Emperor's visit. As a result of the following circumstances our relations with Italy were to become more and more alive.

The moment of mutual approach was propitious in the first place, thanks to the humiliating rôle of "poor relation," which Germany and Austria had for many years delegated to Italy in the Triple Alliance. So long as Italy felt her weakness, from a military and economical point of view, she bore with this pitiful rôle which her allies reserved for her, but as her strategic forces increased, and her commerce and industry developed to the advantage of her financial resources, she began to show her desire to rid herself of this yoke. It was thus, in 1902, Prinetti concluded a treaty with France; that also, in 1906, at the Conference of Algéciras, the representative of Italy voted constantly against Germany, and that Italy more than once found herself in opposition to Austria on the basis of her numerous interests in Trentino.

While discord troubled Italian and Austro-Hungarian relations, Russo-Italian interests seemed to run parallel. Both countries were even united in a common aim, that of frustrating Austria's continuous petty annoyances in Balkan affairs, whilst Italian and Austrian interests were as much opposed as those of Russia and the Dual Monarchy. I remember, as far back as 1902, Count Lamsdorff discussing with Prinetti the Albanese question which was a bone of contention between Rome and Vienna.

Austria's Balkan policy in regard to Russia was one of perfidy. Always encouraged and supported by Berlin, she continually sprung most disagreeable surprises upon us. The following are a few examples. Austria, in her irresistible rush towards the *Ægean* Sea, violated the treaty of 1897, and,



THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS AND KING FREDERICK VIII OF DENMARK AT
THE MANOEUVRES AT KRASNOE SELO, 1909.

without giving us any warning, concluded a treaty with Turkey on the subject of the railway of Sandjak which, passing by Mitrovitza, and traversing the whole of Macedonia, should join Saraevo with Salonique. It is well known that a railway in the hands of a powerful and rich state, passing through a country lacking in culture, is an immense factor of economic and political influence. On the other hand, in order to stifle the economic life of Serbia, Austria obstinately refused to allow her access to the Adriatic. Even when, after the allied war against Turkey in 1912, Serbia had gained that right by armed force, she had to renounce it under Austrian compulsion. Nor did this Empire scruple to use any means at her disposal to attain her ends, such as closing the frontiers, establishing special tariffs, abolishing commercial treaties, etc.

As to the base intrigues of Viennese diplomacy in Balkan affairs, they were too innumerable to mention. The office of the Ballplatz excelled in that domain, and in its arsenal everything could be found: forged documents, for the Friedjung Trial; documents falsified by the help of officials in high places at the Ballplatz, and official agents on the spot, as well as provocation among the Slavonic population in Austria (Zagreb) and abroad (Bosnia). Such also as the revolting trial of Agram, where about fifty Serbians and Croats were accused of an imaginary plot, the documents being manufactured at the Austrian Legation at Belgrade.

To all these proceedings was added later the creation of a morbid political organization in the form of an ethereal principality in Albania. This country, which never had enjoyed any independent existence, was brought to life solely to serve as a pretext for Austro-Germany to meddle more easily in Balkan affairs and cause trouble at the right time. Finally the fraudulent annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and a treaty behind our back with Bulgaria completed the brilliant list.

The treatment which Italy had suffered from Austria for years involuntarily awakened her latent sympathies for France, who had also reason to complain of German

arrogance. It was especially in the affairs of Morocco that Germany constantly provoked France. It suffices to remember Agadir and Algeciras.

The Cabinet of St. Petersburg, faithful nevertheless to its ancient traditions, made many attempts to come to terms with Austria regarding Balkan affairs while neglecting Italy. It is thus that an agreement between Russia and Austria was concluded in 1897, during the visit of the Emperor Francis Joseph to St. Petersburg. Another came to complete it in 1903, under the title of the "Programme of Müritzsteg," etc. It is again to Austria that Isvolsky appealed in 1908 at Buchlau.

In view, however, of constant vexatious and periodical disappointments of Austria, it was natural that Italy and Russia felt drawn together, to which our alliance with Latin France contributed greatly. To complete our *rapprochement* with Italy it was necessary to find a clever man capable of such a task, and Isvolsky's choice fell on Mouravieff, then Minister of Justice, but who asked nothing better than to exchange that department for that of diplomacy. He was the very man for the job: intelligent, energetic, anxious to work. On his nomination to Rome he immediately struck the right note by encouraging Italy to take her place in the world's politics, and he at once opened up political interviews with the Italian Government, which were soon to become negotiations, having for their concrete objective our interests in the Balkans and in the Straits and those of Italy in Albania and Tripoli. It is well known of what vital importance to Italy is the North of Africa, neighbour of Sicily, and the South of Italy. Very shortly these negotiations were drawn up in a written agreement, and all seemed to be going well, when one day, on leaving the "Consulta" where he had just been discussing with Tittoni the terms of the treaty, Mr. Mouravieff had an attack of apoplexy. In his coat pocket was found the project of the future Russo-Italian treaty.

Mr. Mouravieff's successor, Prince N. Dolgorouky, General-Adjutant, was more of a courtier. He was clever

ON THE OCCASION OF THE BOUTENNAVE ANNIVERSARY OF THE THE GREAT ADVANCE THE SWEDEN 1900



but no longer young, and not strong enough to continue the work of his predecessor. I was at that time Chief of the Cabinet for Foreign Affairs, and I recall how, at his nomination as Ambassador, he begged me to initiate him into Italian affairs and especially into those of our recent negotiations with Rome. Having invited him to my study, I pulled out one of the "dossiers." On seeing it, Dolgorouky seized his head in both hands, exclaiming: "In Heaven's name! You surely don't want me to read all that. Do allow me to encroach upon your kindness and capacity to give me an idea of all that is necessary without my having to decipher all these papers." Shortly after he entered on his new duties—that was in 1908.

In the spring of 1909 Isvolsky took a short holiday to join his family, then staying at Florence, and I seized the occasion of the respite to go to Rome. Not wishing to give an official character to his stay in Italy, while desirous nevertheless of knowing the political tendencies of Rome, he invited me to Florence after my visit to Prince Dolgorouky and the Marquis San Juliano.

Thanks to my friendly relations with Goulkevitch, then officially first Secretary of the Embassy at the Quirinal, but the moving spirit and right-hand man of the Ambassador, I was soon sufficiently familiar with current affairs to enable me to meet the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

A few days later we motored to Florence with Goulkevitch and Tchertkoff, reaching Perouse on a beautiful spring evening, and spent the night there. Next day, as I knew that delightful Perugian city by heart, I was able to show all its beauty to my companions. Continuing our journey, we reached Florence towards evening. I communicated my impressions to Isvolsky, and two days later we restarted for Rome.

Just as we were getting into the car, Isvolsky, who was seeing us off, exclaimed, looking at Tchertkoff's beautiful motor: "That is really the only way to travel agreeably." I don't know if his words were of ill-omen, but when within 80 kilometres of Rome, at Narni, a horrible accident almost sent us all into eternity. Another car coming at full speed

dashed into ours and, the guiding wheel broken, the car fell over a precipice. Having had a miraculous escape from certain death, we reached Rome by train at seven o'clock, and that evening I assisted at a dinner party given at the Embassy by Prince Dolgorouky.

During my stay in Rome I learnt the details of the future journey of the Emperor to Italy. In the autumn His Majesty was to come from the Crimea to the Castle of Racconigi, in the vicinity of Turin, where the Royal Family usually spent that part of the year.

I have already mentioned that since the middle of September the Court was at Livadia. It was there that the idea of a voyage to Italy by sea was first conceived, thus giving the Emperor the possibility of visiting Roumania, Bulgaria, and Constantinople.

The political side of the plan was this. Many years previously King Charles of Roumania had visited Russia. The Emperor had never returned this visit, although several Grand Dukes had been ambassadors on various official missions at the Roumanian Court. During the visit of Prince Ferdinand and of the Princess Royal of Roumania at St. Petersburg, in 1908, I had more than once been approached by the Minister of Roumania on the desirability of an Imperial visit to that country. This, he said, would be greatly appreciated by the old King and would contribute to mutual relations, in which direction Mr. Giers, our representative at Bucharest, was then actively engaged.

Bulgaria's great wish at that time was also the reception of the Czar. The Russophil government of Malinoff hoped to make that visit coincide with the consecration of the magnificent cathedral of St. Alexander Nevsky, which had been built at Sofia by the people of Bulgaria, in grateful remembrance of their liberation. All the preparations for this much-wished-for voyage had been made: Parliament had already voted unanimously the necessary credit for the reception of the grandson of the Czar liberator; the Government had discussed and taken the measures of precaution

for the safety of the Sovereign, and King Ferdinand was elaborating the programme of festivities for the occasion. Concerning Constantinople, it was presumed that the Emperor in passing would make a short stay and would visit the Sultan. This courteous gesture would complete, to our advantage, the agreement of our Balkan policy.

Isvolsky attached the greatest importance to these three visits, and to gain the Emperor's consent more easily he approached the High Marshal of the Court, Prince A. Dolgorouky, a man of great common sense, who was said to have great influence with the Czar. Unhappily Isvolsky had the misfortune to ask the advice of our Ambassador at Constantinople. The latter was absolutely opposed to a visit to the Sultan for the following reasons.

A Russian Czar could not, without losing prestige in the eyes of the orthodox world, come to Constantinople so long as the Cross did not dominate the basilica of Saint Sophia. Then, according to Turkish custom, the Padisha could not leave his possessions, and in that case the Emperor's visit would not be returned. That last reason was certainly not valid: the Emperor was not undertaking the voyage especially to visit the Sultan; in passing Constantinople he would have paid the visit and the Sultan could certainly have returned the civility on board the *Standart*. Such considerations had not withheld the Kaiser from undertaking a special journey to the Sultan, and the thought that he would not see him at Berlin in no way deterred him from carrying out his own programme.

The first consideration—that concerning the Cross on Saint Sophia—was found in high authority to be the most weighty and, thanks to that, the voyage to Italy by sea was countermanded. This change cannot be too deeply deplored. It was a great set-back to our interests in the Balkans, especially in Bulgaria.

After having given audience at Livadia to the traditional Turkish Embassy, with Rifaat Pacha at its head, the Emperor started for Italy. The *Standart* left Yalta at six o'clock in the evening, and next morning we reached Odessa. The

Imperial train was waiting at the landing-stage ; the Emperor reviewed the regiments of the local garrison and then entered the train.

The itinerary had been mapped out in such a way as to avoid passing through Austrian territory ; but we traversed a large stretch of Germany and a little bit of French territory near Chambery. The number of kilometres between Odessa and Racconigi was 3333 ; I remember the Emperor being struck by the strange number. At Darmstadt the Grand Duke of Hesse and the Prince and Princess Henry of Prussia entered the train and continued a part of the route with the Czar. Although the Imperial train was only travelling for one hour and a half on French territory, the President of the Council of Ministers, Mr. Pichon, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and representatives of the Protocol were present at the frontier to welcome the Emperor, and they accompanied the Imperial train to the Italian frontier, which was reached at 11 p.m.

During the four days that the journey lasted our time was regulated in the following manner. We took all our meals at the Emperor's table. After dinner His Majesty generally retired to his own carriage and invited us at nine-thirty to the saloon carriage. Every evening he played a game of dominoes with the aide-de-camp, Drenteln, and asked the others to arrange bridge.

To understand the wonderful charm of the Emperor, it was necessary to have the privilege of knowing him thus intimately. Kind, friendly, with ever a gracious word for each and all, he put everyone at ease and straightaway gained everyone's affection and sympathy. During my diplomatic and Court career I had the happiness of being frequently near my Sovereign, and I have kept the most grateful and touching recollections of those days. When at the end of a journey I was compelled to leave His Majesty, I always felt immeasurably sad. He had certainly a most captivating personal charm.

We reached Racconigi in the morning of the fifth day. The King and Queen of Italy resided in the delightful



castle (period Louis XIV) surrounded by a beautiful old park. The castle was sufficiently large and the whole suite of the Emperor was lodged there; each one of us had a small separate apartment, in which the antique furniture was very beautiful, nevertheless the King and Queen excused themselves "for the want of comfort caused by the restricted space at the castle," which discomfort they also shared.

The Emperor's visit was to last two days, but the agreeable hospitality of the Royal Family pleased him so much that he acceded to the request of the King and Queen and remained another twenty-four hours. The Czar seemed to enjoy the great simplicity of the Italian Court, and the quiet peaceful life appealed to him. He took long walks and often played with the delightful royal children, and one morning, to the horror of the Safety Service, he went off, without telling anyone of his intention, for a motor run with the King to Turin, a distance of about 100 kilometres from the Castle. They came back in time for lunch. Turin was a favourite resort for socialists and anarchists, and it was a drive full of risks. King Victor Emmanuel did it in the safest way possible, without previously saying anything about it.

The meals at Racconigi were always taken together. The etiquette of the Italian Court requires that, wherever the Court is in residence, the service of honour is composed of persons from the local society, therefore at Racconigi the Piedmontese were on duty.

Our Ambassador, the Prince Dolgorouky, accompanied by his chief secretary, Goulkevitch, presented himself at Racconigi on the Emperor's arrival; the other members of the Embassy staff were invited to the gala dinner, and were presented to the Emperor before the arrival of the other guests. After the presentation, tea was served on the terrace of the castle, to which all were invited.

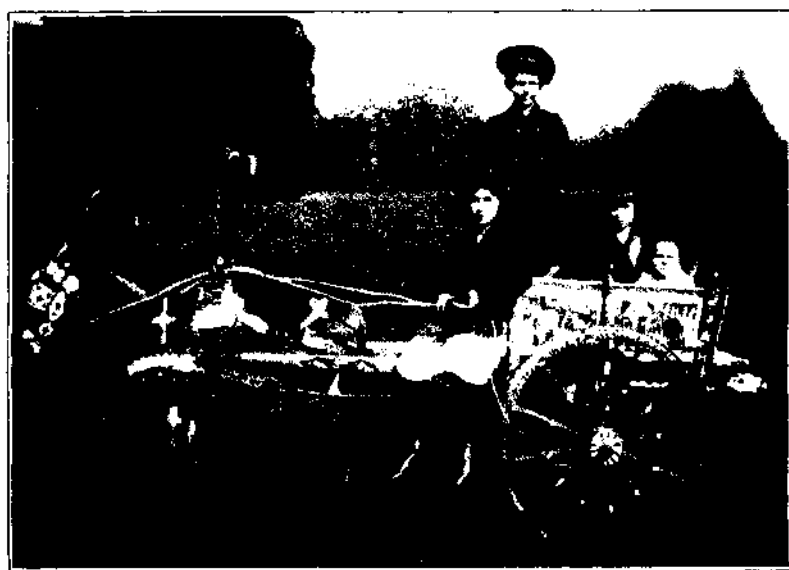
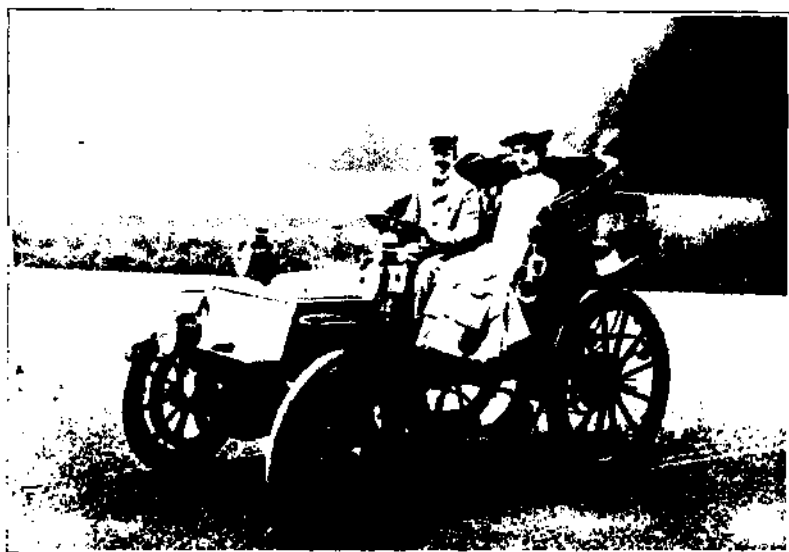
Amongst the guests present at the dinner were the members of the Government, the Court officials, and notabilities of Rome and Turin. Mr. Nathan, the noted Jewish Socialist Mayor of Rome, refused the invitation in the first instance

but accepted it later. The English strain on his mother's side has somewhat attenuated his Semitic appearance ; a man of great intelligence, distinguished, and with charming manners, he impressed me most agreeably. In the drawing-room after dinner the King presented him to the Czar, and it was a curious trio ; an autocratic sovereign, an ultra liberal one, and a rabid socialistic mayor.

As to the main objects of the political conversations between Isvolsky and Tittoni, it concerned our position in regard to the Straits and that of Italy in the Provinces of Tripoli and Cyrenia. I assisted at these interviews in order to register the details and consequently to draw up the negotiations in concrete and precise form. The document was signed, with the approbation of the two Sovereigns, by both Ministers, to their mutual satisfaction, and the Racconigi agreement must be considered the first decisive step taken by Italy to emancipate herself from the yoke of the Triple Alliance.

Just before our departure the Italian royal children begged the Emperor to take a present from them to the Czarevitch. It was a little painted Sicilian two-wheeled cart to which a donkey was harnessed.

On returning to the Crimea the Emperor passed through Warsaw ; at the station he was met by the Governor-General Skalon and the civil and military authorities of the town. When nearing Warsaw Isvolsky and I took leave of His Majesty as we were going straight to St. Petersburg. I remember how with his usual kindness the Emperor saying that he was rather sorry for me being obliged to go to St. Petersburg at that season (we were in October) ; I replied that I certainly should have preferred sunny Yalta with its beautiful blue sea. " Yes," he answered, " but it cannot be helped. Duty first ! "



THE KING AND QUEEN OF ITALY AND THEIR CHILDREN
RAUONIGI 1906

I HAVE already mentioned that after the resignation of Mr. Goubastoff, Isvolsky offered the vacant post of Assistant-Minister to Mr. Sazonoff, with the perspective of the portfolio in the event of Isvolsky's departure. Having accepted the proposal, Mr. Sazonoff came shortly after to the capital and took the direction of affairs when Mr. Isvolsky went on his usual autumn leave. Family reasons retained me at this moment in the country; while there I heard of the death of Mr. Nelidoff, Ambassador in Paris, and the nomination of Mr. Isvolsky in his stead.

The Emperor was then in Germany, near Nauheim, where the Empress was taking the waters. On learning of Mr. Nelidoff's death, Isvolsky went at once to the Emperor to ask for the post in Paris. At the same time he obtained His Majesty's consent to other nominations: Mr. N. Giers at the Embassy of Vienna; Prince Koudacheff and Baron Buxoeveden—to those of Brussels and Copenhagen. This time he did not appear to have remembered me.

Without pretending to know of anything further than his own nomination, I wrote to Isvolsky to remind him of our conversation in 1908 and his advice some time after in retaining me in the Ministry, "to throw in my lot with his." I added that I should not have refused any Legation, not even that of Copenhagen, if it fell vacant. For two weeks I received no reply. At last Isvolsky wrote that his answer had been delayed, as he had wished absolutely to speak personally to the Emperor on my behalf, and when in the conversation he had mentioned Copenhagen, His Majesty said, very much surprised: "What could he do there? He must have a more active post, and I have destined him for Sofia."

While this correspondence was being carried on I went back to town. Sazonoff begged me to continue my functions as Chief of the Cabinet, and I remained more than a year longer at this post. In November I accompanied the new Minister to Berlin and to Darmstadt, where he was joining the Emperor, who was meeting the Kaiser at Potsdam.

In Berlin we stayed at the Embassy. The day of our arrival Count Osten-Sacken invited the Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, and Kiderlen-Wächter, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to lunch. Both statesmen were very anxious to make Sazonoff's acquaintance before the interview between the Emperors, and they were full of attention for the new Minister; it was very evident that they were relieved to have got rid of Isvolsky, whose policy was not to their liking and, hoping to succeed better with the present Minister, they were most obsequious. The Chancellor's manner was much gentler than Kiderlen-Wächter, who invited us to luncheon next day. He was rather a bad copy of Bismarck, and with all his boastfulness left a very bad impression of Prussian rudeness.

After Berlin we spent two or three days at Darmstadt; from there the Emperor went to Potsdam. In the morning of November 11 the Imperial train arrived at the pavilion of Wildpark, where the Kaiser, with the princes and a numerous suite, awaited his Imperial visitor. A guard of honour marched past the two Emperors, who then drove to the palace, in front of which were stationed the Potsdam garrison. After the review we entered the palace, just as we were, in our outdoor dress, to offer our homage to the Empress, who received us in the entrance hall of the castle. I had not seen Her Majesty for some time, and I found that since then her hair had greatly silvered, which suited her well. The Czar took up his residence in the new palace; the Minister in the old castle.

The same day after lunch I was commanded to transmit the decorations of the Order of St. Andrew to the Chancellor, which the Emperor had just conferred upon him. It was with great pleasure that, in paying other official visits, I



THE EMPEROR WILLIAM AND HIS FAMILY AT FROSDAM

drove through the Potsdam Park, so full of souvenirs of Frederick the Great, of which the famous mill is not the least. After dinner, at which both Emperors were present, we separated very early.

The next morning was devoted to political conversations between Mr. Sazonoff, the Chancellor, and Kiderlen-Wächter. The result of these interviews is known:—Yielding to the persistent demands of the Germans, we consented to join the Bagdad railway with the Persian railway line. Long before Sazonoff's departure for Berlin the Count de Pourtalès came many times to the Ministry always trying to obtain, as he expressed it, "that little concession," which in reality would cost Russia nothing, but would prove her good feelings towards Germany. Evidently "the little concession" was much more significant than was acknowledged by Count de Pourtalès. Having at last attained their end at Potsdam the Germans were triumphant.

The Czar was leaving for Darmstadt at 11 p.m. Before his departure in the "Muschelnsaal" of the palace there was a large dinner-party, called on the invitation cards "supper." The whole staff of the Berlin Embassy was invited. Later, in the drawing-room, the Kaiser could not hide his satisfaction and was particularly amiable with the Russians. His example was followed by all present, not excepting the Empress. As a tyrannical discipline reigned at the Court of Berlin, the Emperor's word was law to be infallibly observed in the slightest details. I experienced this fact myself. We had just left table and were standing round taking coffee. I had still my cup in my hand when a master of ceremonies came hurriedly up to me: "*Ihre Majestät die Kaiserin will mit Ihnen sprechen!*" With exaggerated politeness the Empress spoke at length with me of her delight at having been made Honorary Chief of the Regiment of the Grodno Hussars, and she even asked me, a civilian, about certain details of the uniform of her new regiment. She had scarcely given me permission to retire when Count Eulenburg, Grand Marshal of the Court,

usually a grim and silent man, who for years had never spoken a word to me, now came up, saying how happy he was to hear that in the past two days questions of such importance to the two neighbouring and friendly nations had been settled; and so forth. From the drawing-room we went to the theatre, where a cinematograph film of the march past of the preceding day was thrown on the screen. Towards 11 p.m. the guests took leave of the Empress, and the two Emperors drove to the station.

When the Imperial train had left, the Kaiser on leaving the platform caught sight of me. Approaching with outstretched hand, he asked me if I was remaining in Berlin for some time, and then with evident pleasure he said: "I am very happy to have had the visit of the Emperor and especially to have found him so gay and well-disposed. Everything passed off very well and I am very satisfied." Again giving me a vigorous hand-shake, he left the station. It was the last time that I saw him.

Next morning the Count Osten-Sacken took Sazonoff and me in his car to Berlin. In the evening we dined at the Chancellor's. Sazonoff was seated on the right of our hostess and I on the left. Madame Bethmann-Hollweg, who seemed a gentle, agreeable woman, told me amongst other things how terribly agitated her husband was always on the days preceding his presence at the Reichstag and in what a state of prostration after these sittings. These details confirmed the personal impression made by the Chancellor. After Bülow he appeared not to have stamina enough to resist his political adversaries or to keep pace with the energetic demands of the Kaiser. He seemed to me to be too superior, too honest for his surroundings, and in my imagination I saw him promptly giving place to some one of a coarser grain. To my mind it would be to Kiderlen-Wächter, a coarse, cynical man. I must, however, offer honourable amends; I was utterly mistaken, I acknowledge frankly. Shortly after Kiderlen died suddenly, and Bethmann-Hollweg remained long in power and became of notorious repute as the man of "The Scrap of Paper."



THE EX-EMPEROR WILLIAM AND HIS FAMILY AT POTSDAM

On our return to St. Petersburg I found Isvolsky on the eve of his departure for Paris. The ex-Minister was very interested in all the details of the Potsdam interview and, hearing of the amiability shown us by the Germans, he must have remembered with bitterness the reception given him in 1908. He could not help exclaiming: "It is quite natural that I should have to bear the brunt."

THE Isvolskys gone, Sazonoff now took up his abode at the Ministry.

One morning, entering the Cabinet of my new chief with the usual papers, he had just received the news of the death of our Minister at Lisbon. Holding out the wire to me, he said: "Probably this post may not appeal to you but, were I in your place, I should not refuse it." He then gave me his reasons, which were not without foundation, and concluded by saying: "If you were twenty years older, you might be afraid that it meant the marshal's baton, but at your age the first active vacancy that occurs will be yours." I yielded to his arguments, and for some time I was considered the future nominee of the Lisbon post. I never took it, however, as Mr. Narischkine, then Minister at Sweden, who could not stand the northern climate, begged me to exchange posts with him, which I did most readily.

My nomination was postponed on account of Sazonoff's serious illness. During this delay I took a motor trip throughout Russia and in the beginning of October I reached Paris. Almost immediately after I received a wire from the Ministry with a proposal to act as first delegate at the International Opium Conference which was to open shortly at the Hague.

This proposal was doubly tempting in as much as it offered me for the first time the chance of taking part in a large international assembly, also that of seeing a country which I did not know and which I had long wished to visit.

I spent three months in Holland, the duration of the conference, and I have kept the most agreeable souvenir of that time. All the week-days, except Saturday, were

occupied by the work of the conference either in commissions or in general assemblies. These assemblies were never very lengthy and left sufficient leisure, either in the morning or evening, to visit the historical monuments and curiosities of the town, or to wander through the quaint old narrow streets brilliantly lighted at night and crowded with people. What attracted me chiefly were the antiquary shops in which this country abounds, and I paid them many visits both in the Hague and elsewhere.

One must have visited Holland to understand the special charm which emanates from these countless little towns, which I visited whenever leisure permitted. They have taken and retained the character of those far-off centuries in which they were built, and in treading the streets of Haarlem or Delft you are carried back to the epoch of the XVIIth century, which the Flemish artists love to reproduce in their paintings: the streets, intersected by canals, bordered by trees, the old houses with their projecting fronts built to allow goods being pulled up to the upper stories. After wandering through the streets I entered the museums, there to find on the walls what I had just seen outside. And the winter! I had the rare luck of seeing the canals frozen. For some time past the Dutch climate has considerably changed, which is supposed to be due to the deviation of the course of the Gulf Stream. At present one very rarely experiences those winters with ice and skating which Dutch artists from time immemorial have loved to paint. Christmas of 1911 proved an exception, and the canals were scarcely frozen before they were covered by a crowd of skaters, some for pleasure, others simply as an easy means of communication between the various little towns. However this winter scene only lasted a few days.

There is a great deal of social life at The Hague. Every evening has its round of gaiety, receptions, dinners, etc. Queen Wilhelmina gave a dinner in honour of all the delegates of the conference. Her little court is very elegant. Another day Mr. Kraemer, the Dutch delegate, invited

the members of the conference to lunch at his mansion, surrounded by fields of tulips and hyacinths.

As to the work of the conference, Russia had no direct interest to guard, as the cultivation of the poppy is not extensive in the Empire, and my instructions were limited to supporting my French and British colleagues in the questions regarding their respective countries. The Americans gave the most of the work to the conference, and were the cause of its lasting longer than was first anticipated. Their delegates at the last moment often sprung the most unexpected questions upon us which had been agreed upon not to raise. Thanks to this the conference could not be closed in the delay fixed and the delegates separated at Christmas to take up their work again in January.

In the interim I returned to St. Petersburg, passing by Stockholm where I had to make arrangements for my future installation. On Christmas Eve I took the boat to Russia, and I remember well the fairy-like scene. In Sweden winter is much more severe than in Holland, and all was covered with snow and the cold was intense. Leaving Stockholm by moonlight the vessel entered the fjords and, advancing through a narrow channel cut in the ice, she seemed to be sliding along the snow; sleighs and foot passengers passed along on either side. This strange voyage, where the ship seemed to be sliding over the land, across the little islets all covered with snow and illuminated by the full moon, produced an extraordinary impression. A Christmas-tree was lighted in the dining-room below.

I only remained at St. Petersburg for a few days before returning to The Hague, having been elected member of the editing commission that had to prepare the papers to be signed at the reopening of the conference. There were few minutes of the conference after Christmas, and the work was brought to an end on January 11.

JUST as I was leaving The Hague I received a telegram from our representative at Stockholm saying that King Gustave had fixed my reception audience for January 14, the day of the Court ball, thus to give me the possibility of assisting at that, the first entertainment of the season. I wired that I would be punctual at the royal invitation.

Two days after, I reached Stockholm at eight o'clock and I immediately telephoned to Count Ehrenswärd, Minister for Foreign Affairs, begging him to receive me before the Royal audience, which was fixed for three o'clock. At twelve o'clock I saw the minister. He could not on his own authority tell me if there would be any exchange of speeches with the King, as since he had been appointed to the Ministry I was the first foreign minister to present his credentials and before replying he wished to ask the King's commands. In Sweden everything is done by telephone, and I had just returned to my hotel when I was told that His Majesty declined any speeches. About three o'clock the Grand Master of Ceremonies came in a state carriage to escort me and the staff of the Legation to the palace.

These audiences in Sweden are conducted with great pomp. A guard of honour was stationed in the hall; on the steps of an enormous staircase were placed two by two sentries in uniforms of ancient times. The Court officials were in the ante-room of that in which the King gave audience; His Majesty was wearing the uniform of a Russian Admiral with the ribbon of St. Andrew. After a few minutes' amiable conversation His Majesty reiterated his invitation to the ball that evening; after my audience I presented to him the gentlemen on the staff of the Legation

and I was then received in the same palace by the Prince and Princess Royal. At the ball I was introduced to my colleagues of the diplomatic corps, and the notabilities of the political and social world. Next day I paid my official visits and then left for St. Petersburg to transmit my office of Chief of the Cabinet to my successor and prepare for my departure.

I had no special instructions given me by Sazonoff on leaving for Stockholm. They were resumed in the general terms to endeavour to consolidate reciprocal friendly relations between the two countries. Two points only were specified: the first—not to touch the *status quo* of the Aland Islands, the other to raise the dignity of our representation in Sweden which, according to Sazonoff, had for some time past not been worthy of the situation. To conform with the latter instruction I took a large modern house, consisting of two flats, which I threw into one. While the alterations were going on I lived in a hotel. We were at the end of March; the Russian and foreign Easter coincided, and I was not a little surprised on returning after our religious services of Holy Week to see the elegant restaurant of the hotel as crowded as usual and the orchestra playing both on Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

My first impression of Stockholm was more or less a melancholy one. I had just left a Ministry where my duties had for years past brought me in touch with all the current and most important questions of the day. At first I felt as though I were in exile at Stockholm; an occasional ministerial courier brought me some documents which looked as though they had come out of the ark. Living in a hotel, with few acquaintances and not knowing the language, it was extremely dull in the beginning, but this state of things did not last long. I began my first Swedish lessons, and when I got into my own rooms, surrounded by my household gods, I felt straight away much happier. Very soon I had my own social circle. The Swedish hospitality and good-humour is very similar to our own, so that when two years later I was leaving Stockholm for

Bulgaria I did so with very great regret at leaving behind many friends.

Anticipating events, I shall mention at once that I was fortunate that the two years I spent in Sweden were particularly eventful and pleasant. The Olympic Games were followed by winter sports, the Russian-Swedish motor races, the visit of King Gustave to the Czar, that of the King and Queen of Italy to Stockholm, etc. Then in order to get a better knowledge of the country I made many excursions, one more interesting than another. One to North Cape, another in a sailing yacht in the Danish Straits, a trip in a motor boat by lake and canal from one end of Sweden to another, countless motor drives through the country with its picturesque sites, its castles, and most interesting historical monuments.

I arrived in Sweden shortly after the publication of Sven Hedin's pamphlet, of which I have already spoken. This pamphlet was printed in sufficient quantity for distribution to a third of the Swedish population besides allowing a good number to the schools and other establishments. The contents may be resumed in a few words: the author wished to prove that Russia, not having an outlet to the Pacific, nor in the Persian Gulf, would naturally look for it on the side of the Atlantic by passing through Sweden. In warning the Swedes of this danger, Sven Hedin advised them to avert it by uniting with Germany, who was quite "disinterested" and quite ready to seize the first chance of obtaining the possession of Finland for Sweden.

On my arrival in Sweden reporters came to me requesting interviews. In granting them, I explained all that the reasoning of Sven Hedin contained of biased views, and my conviction that in spite of their efforts to the contrary, these pamphleteers would have difficulty in spoiling the relations of two neighbouring countries, whose policy was based on reciprocal confidence and good will. One of the journalists expressed my views in a lengthy article which appeared on the same day as the official dinner given in my honour by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

On leaving table Count Ehrenswärd took me aside and after thanking me profusely for my message to the Press, he affirmed me that my words had produced an excellent impression in the country. He likewise assured me on his part and in the name of the Royal Government of their sincere wish to maintain the friendly relations of good neighbours.

Meanwhile, the German intrigues did not discontinue. They published reports in the papers of the illegal activities of our Military Attaché at Stockholm. According to these rumours the latter, disguised as a peasant, had been caught in the neighbourhood of the fortress of Boden while taking photographs and making topographical investigations. Public opinion lent a willing ear to these fantastic calumnies, all the more easily as the fortress in question was on the borders of the Gulf of Bothnia just opposite to Russia. Society, especially military society, even commenced to turn a cold shoulder to our Military Attaché. I did not think it right that these libels, absurd as they were, should be allowed to pass unnoticed, and I tried to show public opinion the utter stupidity of the whole story, and for this purpose I made use of the Press and my conversations with political and military men.

My argument was very simple and, perhaps on account of its simplicity, it struck the Swedish imagination and had the desired effect. If we had stooped to such ignoble means, would it not be more than naive on our part, with tens of thousands of officers at our command, just to choose for such a task one who was so well known to the Swedes for the past five years. The effervescence of the first moment calmed down in consequence and gave place to a more reasonable frame of mind.

Sven Hedin's pamphlet was followed soon after by another from the pen of Mr. Falbeck. This professor at the University of Lund signalled more or less the same "Russian Danger." I drew the Minister for Foreign Affairs' attention to the evil effects such literature had on the good relations between the two countries. He promised to take

the first opportunity of condemning publicly in the Chamber the conduct of these journalists which put in jeopardy the whole work of the diplomats, and he kept his promise.

As a serious-minded intelligent man he did not share the militant policy of Berlin, which was only approved of by a few Court officials and officers of the guard, who were fascinated by Potsdam rule. As to the Government and the Swedish people, they had no wish to bring trouble on the country. They had the greatest fear of the eventuality of complications, understanding perfectly well that the period of Gustave Adolphus was irrevocably past and, instead of wishing to play a part in European politics, the country should bear in mind her little state of five million inhabitants, who latterly had put her commerce and industry on a firm footing, and in that lay all her welfare. To be drawn into a conflagration meant for Sweden to lose all and gain nothing. To enter into a struggle with giants would be of no advantage to her while she would risk disorganizing all the sources of her material welfare.

Many branches of Swedish industry had attained a high degree of perfection, such as the manufacture of machinery, motor industry, electric fittings, sleeping-cars, etc. The Swedes often begin working in rather a slow fashion, but with practice they adapt themselves and are always punctual and hard-working; these are national characteristics. As they are slow workers Swedish articles are always expensive, but the demand outside the country always exceeds the supply.

Swedish commerce has developed extensively of late years. Shortly after my arrival I assisted at an important meeting of the Swedish Commercial Society—"Svenska Export-Veröning"—in honour of the twenty-fifth anniversary of its foundation. The accounts rendered read at that meeting proved the extension of Swedish trade during the past quarter of a century. The Society owned numerous commercial vessels plying between Europe and the other countries of the globe. The yearly turnover of the Society was on the increase. Why should Sweden risk the loss of

all this prosperity, the result of a generation of hard work, by rushing into the adventure of war. The sensible and practical Swede refused to submit his country to the ephemeral chances of a struggle on the advice of the German war-lords.

I frequently discussed with the Minister for Foreign Affairs the danger to Sweden of the Berlin policy. Count Ehrenswärd, with his clear vision, always did his utmost to smooth the difficulties of the situation, to dispel my suspicions and anxieties. This conciliatory attitude, especially after his speech in the Chamber regarding Sven Hedin and Falbeck, brought on him the virulent attacks of certain sections of the Swedish Press, as well as that of Germany. A Swedish journal, *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, published a series of articles to prove that he was under the influence of Russia's representative, designed by the title of "Russian Satrap." The author added that, happily, the times of Catherine the Great has for ever disappeared, and that the Russian Minister could no longer play the part of "Razoumovsky."¹

These ignominious articles were reproduced and commented upon and added to by the papers of the German party. The German Press in turn, especially the *Schlesische Zeitung*, of Stettin, whose articles were reprinted by the Berlin papers, violently attacked the German representative at Stockholm, accusing him of having allowed the influence which Germany had so far maintained in Sweden to have been ousted in favour of Russia. These bitter criticisms were as disagreeable to my German colleague as they were to me, although from different points of view. I feared that they might compromise my relations with the Government to which I had been attached, and with which I had succeeded in establishing reciprocal confidential ties. So I resolved to speak frankly with Mr. von Reichenau. In a perfectly friendly conversation I expressed my regret at the articles in question, telling him that if they were disagreeable to him, they were still more embarrassing for me.

¹ Count Razoumovsky was Russian Ambassador at the Court of Gustave III.

The Olympic games were to take place at Stockholm during the summer of 1912. Many Russian and Finnish sportsmen expressed their wish to participate, and our cavalry officers intended taking part. The participation of the Finns, on account of their separatist leanings and the historical sympathy which they enjoyed in Sweden, presented rather a delicate point. I insisted on having exact and competent instructions as to the attitude to assume in various eventualities, and before leaving for my new post I called on the President of the Council of Ministers, the Minister of War, and on the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicolae-vitch, who had taken the "Concours Hippique" under his high patronage. Mr. Kokovtzeff gave me verbal instructions, which he afterwards confirmed in writing, according to which I had to see that Finland should always be represented under the Russian flag as part of the Russian Empire.

The Grand Duke asked me to keep him in touch with events which it imported him to know, adding that if by my reports he noticed that there was a tendency to give to sport an unfavourable political character to us, he would at once renounce his Honorary Presidency and likewise take measures to prevent our officers from going to Sweden. When, on my arrival at Stockholm, I submitted to the Minister for Foreign Affairs the conditions under which we would take part in the Olympic games, he gave me a formal assurance that all would be carried out according to our wishes. The invitation had been the initiative of the Swedish Government, and this was our guarantee.

The following will show that there were nevertheless frequent misunderstandings which had to be rectified. The ceremony of the opening of the Stadium was fixed for the end of June, but the tennis tournament, which was between players from all parts of the world, began much earlier. King Gustave, an excellent tennis player himself, the Court, and Society followed these competitions with deep interest.

The Russian sportsmen, numbering four hundred, arrived on board a vessel especially equipped for them by the

Imperial Government—the *Birma*, a ship belonging to the East Asiatic Company.

The Grand Duke with the Grand Duchess Cyril were amongst the official personages attending the games. Their visit was the result of my suggestion. On my first arrival in Sweden I heard that German and English warships would be in Swedish waters during the period of the Olympic games, and it seemed to me only fitting that the Russian Navy should also be represented.

The Cruiser *Oleg* was due to make her summer cruise in the Baltic Sea, under the command of the Grand Duke Cyril, and it was that ship which came first to my mind in regard to our representation. The Grand Duke, to whom I confided my idea on arriving at St. Petersburg, fully agreed with me, and he authorized me to carry the matter further. I spoke to the Emperor, who gave his consent on principle and told me to elaborate the details with the Naval minister, adding that it would perhaps be preferable to send a squadron of torpedo-boats. Admiral Grigorovitch was in favour of the *Oleg*, and the Grand Duke's mission was definitely decided.

I then asked the Grand Duchess if she would not accompany the Grand Duke. She was pleased at the suggestion and begged me to make arrangements with the Court. As she could not remain on board the warship commanded by the Grand Duke, she hoped to enjoy the hospitality of her cousin, the Princess Royal.¹ On my return to Stockholm I requested an audience of the King in order to announce the Emperor's decision. In doing so I told His Majesty that my Imperial Master had chosen the cruiser *Oleg*, commanded by his cousin, to show the importance that he attached to the good relations between the two countries. As the Princess Royal was in delicate health, and could not see me personally, I gave the message of the Grand Duchess to His Majesty. "I shall speak to my daughter-in-law," he answered with his usual affability, "of the intention of the Grand Duchess, but I beg of you to write now and tell

¹ Since deceased.

her that we shall be delighted to see her and look forward to her visit with pleasure."

Many foreign princes were expected at Stockholm during the summer, and among their number the German Crown Prince. To determine the precedence of the Grand Duke Cyril, the Court inquired if he came as Commander of his ship or as representative of the Emperor? Wishing to assure a Grand Duke of Russia a reception in no way inferior to that of the other princes, I replied that as Commander on board, but on land the Grand Duke had the right to all the honours due to his exalted rank. Consequently His Imperial Highness was received with great pomp and ceremony.

After paying the official visits as Commander to the authorities, the Grand Duke then joined the Grand Duchess on board a small yacht belonging to the Ministry of Marine. Their Highnesses landed at the chief landing-stage, where they were met by the Prince and Princess Royal, surrounded by the Court. After reviewing the troops drawn up on parade the royal party drove to the Palace, where they were received by the King and Queen, and then were present at a State luncheon given in their honour.

A few days later the Grand Duke Dimitri came to stay with his sister, and the Grand Duke Boris asked me to allow him to stay at my house. Stockholm became for a few weeks the rendezvous of European elegance and sport. More than ten private yachts were lying in the harbour. Sport and lavish entertaining were the order of the day. One evening the King had given a dinner in honour of the foreign royalties. As Court receptions in Sweden were never very late, a whole company of young people, with the Duchess of Sudermanie at the head, had announced their intention of spending the evening at my place. In taking leave of his visitors after dinner, the King wished me to remain for a game of cards, but hearing that I had visitors at home, he said, with his usual charming simplicity: "Oh well, go home this evening, we shall have our game another time."

While the "Games" lasted the Russian Legation was never without guests. Luncheons, dinners, and receptions followed each other almost daily. One day we had the honour of the King's presence to dinner, another time the Prince and Princess Royal graced our table.

But the Olympic games did not pass altogether without a little political discord. At the opening of the Stadium a disagreeable incident occurred. The Finnish sportsmen, separating themselves from their Russian comrades, remained alone in the arena, and certain members of the audience gave them a demonstrative ovation. Another time the Finns, instead of proclaiming their victory under the Russian colours, as had been agreed upon, displayed a Finnish flag. Once again when the Finns were victorious the orchestra played the famous Björneborg March, which was considered as a seditious Finnish anthem in Russia, and so forth. I should have been acting contrary to my instructions if I had let these incidents pass unnoticed. I called on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and drew his attention, in a friendly but firm tone, to these infractions of agreement. He acknowledged the justice of my observations, and on the very next day sent me the General Administrator of the Games to express his regrets and assurances that nothing of the kind should occur in future.

At the close of the Olympic games King Gustave was to meet the Emperor Nicholas in Finnish waters. This meeting was at first intended to be of a strictly private nature, and the ministerial despatches stated that the Sovereign would be unaccompanied by their Ministers for Foreign Affairs. Later a personal telegram from the Ministry of the Imperial Household informed me that the Czar invited me to assist at his interview with the King of Sweden, "if I found my presence opportune and necessary from a local point of view." As there could be no two opinions on the subject, I replied to Count Fredericks that I considered his telegram as a command which I could not fail to obey.

I did not consider it necessary to keep my correspondence with Livadia a secret from the Ministry, so I informed Mr.

Neratoff, who was acting in Mr. Sazonoff's absence, about it. Just at that time Sazonoff returned to St. Petersburg, and I learned shortly after that the private nature of the King's visit had been altered and that the two Ministers for Foreign Affairs were accompanying their Sovereigns. Later, during the interview, Prince Orloff explained to me the origin of the telegram which I had received from Count Fredericks. The Emperor did not wish to disturb Mr. Sazonoff, who was on leave at that time, so His Majesty had given orders to send for me.

Thus before the end of the Olympic games I was obliged to leave for Russia. Our Grand Dukes remained behind at Stockholm and the Grand Duke Boris was still staying at my house.

At Viborg I met the official personages who were coming from St. Petersburg to assist at the interview. It was my first visit to Russia since I had left the country and my first meeting with the members of the Imperial Suite, one of whose number I had so frequently been on previous royal journeys.

The interview, which was most cordial, lasted two days. The only political question which was broached was that concerning the Aland Islands. Meeting the desire of Sweden half-way, Sazonoff promised to preserve the *status quo*.

King Gustave offered to take me back to Sweden on his boat, but I did not profit by his amiable offer as I had been authorized to spend some little time in Russia. It was the Emperor who, on taking leave of me, said that it was a pity to be so near St. Petersburg and not to go. I did not wait for a second invitation but went to Strelna to spend a few days with my friends the Orloff's, from where I returned to Stockholm, and only in the month of November I took a real holiday, which I divided between Paris and St. Petersburg. For New Year's Day I was back again at my post.

THE year began by a grand dinner at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in honour of the Diplomatic Corps. Next day I was invited to an intimate little dinner with the King, who at that time of the year generally resided in the castle of Drottningholm, a few kilometres from the capital, and only returned to town after New Year's Day for the opening of Parliament, when the Court receptions began.

Amongst the many historical castles of Sweden that of Drottningholm had a special charm; it also differs from others, perhaps more ancient and more imposing, by being brought thoroughly up to date in modern comfort. Built in the XVIth century, on the smiling banks of Lake Moelar, the castle of Drottningholm was completely rebuilt in the XVIIIth century by Gustave III. The predilection of this King, contemporary of Louis XVI for all that was French, is well known, and so it is that you trace in the architecture of the castle, and in the arrangement of the beautiful surrounding park, reminiscences of the perfect taste of Versailles. During the elegant reign of Gustave III Drottningholm had become the centre of Court life. It was here that political intrigues were formed and the game of love was played. On the boards of this theatre the poet-King staged his plays, and French actors played those of foreign authors. Often the King acted himself, and the play ended, he left the stage and, without changing his costume, mingled with the brilliant crowd of his decorated guests.

The annals of this theatre are not without incidents of gallantry, one of which had its echoes in political affairs. Mr. Morkoff, Russian Ambassador, having fallen a victim

to the charms of a French actress, Mlle Husse, carried her off during one of the representations. Our political enemies took advantage of this incident to get rid of the Ambassador whose Finnish policy did not suit the Swedes. Drottningholm Castle continued to be the centre of social life and of continuous festivities until the moment when, Gustave III preparing to go to the assistance of his friend Louis XVI, threatened by the revolution, fell a victim of a political assassin. A dagger thrust, by an Ankarströma, at a masked ball at the Opera, brought his life to an end. The costume and the mask worn by Gustave III at this ball, as well as the dagger of the assassin, are preserved in one of the museums of Stockholm; the fine gilt panellings of the "promenade" of the Opera where the crime was perpetrated have been removed to the castle of Gripsholmen.

After the decease of Gustave III the castle of Drottningholm was completely abandoned for more than a century, and the furniture and objects of art which formed its decoration were removed to other palaces. It is only during the present reign, thanks to Queen Victoria, that this magnificent residence was again recalled to life. Her Majesty found and collected together the ancient artistic treasures of the castle and had them once more installed in their erstwhile places. Other objects of the same period, known in Sweden under the title of Gustavian style (*gustavianska*) have been added to the original, and contribute to the elegance and comfort of modern life.

The dinner to which I was invited at the beginning of January, 1913, was served in the beautiful gallery of the castle, ornamented with tapestry, the subjects of which are taken from the history of the three Scandinavian States.

In 1913 we celebrated the three hundredth year jubilee of the Romanoff dynasty. The national festivities organized on that occasion were divided in two series: the first took place during the winter at St. Petersburg, while in the spring the Emperor Nicholas wished to visit the cradle of the dynasty, at Kostroma, from where he went with the whole Court to Moscow. The Russian representatives

abroad were invited in turn to organize festivities at the embassies confided to their care. In winter at Stockholm we had a solemn service in church, a grand luncheon, dinner, and a ball at the Legation. But in May I asked permission to go to Moscow, where I had never seen the grand reception of its Sovereign. Now that all has passed away, alas ! I thank Heaven that I had the happy thought of going at that time.

I shall never forget the pious, and at the same time ceremonious atmosphere of the ancient capital rejoicing to offer hospitality to "the Lord's anointed." To understand the wonder of it all, one had to be present ; not only present, shall I say, one had to be Russian. From my childhood I had always heard that the appearance of the Czar on the "Krasnoe Kryltzo" of the Kremlin produced a most thrilling impression ; but the most vivid imagination cannot describe the grandeur of the picture or the deep emotion which I felt assisting at the sumptuous yet touching ceremonies of the Moscow churches, and the traditional ball of the nobility, which revived once again the ties which united from the most remote era the Czars with the best forces of the country. And above all the street, that street vibrating with an enthusiasm that infinitely surpassed that of St. Petersburg. When, after the festivities at Moscow and before my return to Stockholm, I had an audience with the Emperor at Tsarskoe, I could not refrain from mentioning the unforgettable impressions which I had received. The Emperor, still deeply touched, told me that even at the Coronation he had not seen such enthusiasm.

Profiting by the good weather, I returned to Sweden by sea : it took forty-eight hours from St. Petersburg to Stockholm. A few days later the Duchess of Sudermanie came back from Moscow and brought with her the news that the Emperor had a more important post shortly in view for me.

The King and Queen of Italy were expected at Stockholm. As there was still about a month till the date fixed for their arrival I took a trip meanwhile to North Cape. This most

northerly point of Europe can only be visited during the two of the warmest summer months, and it is a very comfortable journey. We left by special train called the "Lapp Express" and first passed Boden, the famous Swedish fortress on the borders of the Gulf of Bothnia, destined to protect Sweden from Russian invasion; then came Porjus, Gelivare, and Kiruna with their copper mines and waterfalls, the enormous motor power of which serves to the lighting of a great part of the country. In the vicinity of these towns we saw Lapp camps; a little further the train crossed the polar circle. After forty-eight hours' journey we reached Narvick, a Norwegian port on the Atlantic coast, from where a boat took us through the delightful Norwegian fjords and the pretty Lofoten Islands, landing successively at Loden, Tromsö, Hammerfest, Lingen, and lastly at North Cape.

We were at that time of the year when, in these latitudes, the sun does not leave the horizon for several weeks at a time, and we were able to photograph the *astre* at midnight; but the reverse of this beautiful picture is that, once the fine season is over, the country is plunged into darkness for several months and all life dies.

On our return we landed at Trondhjem to visit the beautiful Gothic cathedral, where the Norwegian kings are crowned. Unhappily I had no more time to dispose of for this wonderful trip and I had to return to be present at the arrival of their Italian Majesties.

King Victor Emmanuel and Queen Helena came from Italy by boat. Expected in the morning, the Royal yacht only arrived in the evening; thanks to this delay, the Queen, the Princesses of the Royal Household, and all the other ladies, went to the landing-stage in evening dress, as immediately after the arrival there was a State dinner.

Before dinner the King had time to receive the Diplomatic Corps. The evening in the drawing-room when I approached the Queen she did me the honour of alluding to my stay at Racconigi in 1909, and inquired about the health of the Czarevitch, whom I had lately seen in Moscow. Like

the good mother that she is, the Queen was greatly concerned about the health of the little Grand Duke ; she said that she was sure he would get quite well if he spent some time with her children in the sun at the seaside. " As to my children," continued the Queen, " I always say they will have plenty of time to be princes, but before everything else they must gain health and strength ; they are just now at the seaside, and spend their days on the sand and are as black as negroes."

Next day the King and Queen of Italy lunched privately at the Castle of Drottningholm. The Grand Duke and the Grand Duchess Cyril had come to Stockholm to assist at a motor race arranged by the Royal Swedish Club, and it was to their presence I owed the invitation which I also received to the luncheon.

The same evening there was a dinner at the Russian Legation in honour of the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess, after which those who had taken part in the motor race, Russians and Swedes, were presented to their Highnesses. The Grand Duchess had come to Stockholm in quality of President of the Imperial Baltic Club, and her name was given to the race " Victoria Fahrt," in which more than forty cars took part, more than half of which belonged to the Baltic Barons. The race lasted ten days ; it was admirably organized and combined to show the foreigners the most beautiful views of Central Sweden.

Shortly after I took another trip through Sweden in a motor boat. Thanks to a system of canals with sluices uniting the three great Swedish lakes, Moelar, Venner, and Vetter, you may go from the east to the west coast of Sweden.

At the end of the third day we reached the port of Gothenburg, where our Naval Attaché awaited me on a sailing yacht. He took me by the Cattegat to Marstrand, a whaling-station very much in vogue in Sweden, and then to Lusecil, a charming Norwegian fishing village, where I took the boat for Christiania. I am happy to have had the time to go to Bergen ; since then that delightful town has suffered terribly from fire. Before the fire, by the side of the modern



THE ARRIVAL OF H.M. THE KING AND QUEEN OF ITALY
VISITING THE HOSPITAL. STOCKHOLM 1915

town there was the old town built entirely of wood. Some houses, dating from the time when Bergen was part of the Commercial Union known under the name of "Hansa," were in very good style. The prettiest part of the town was the "Fiskatorpet," the fish market. In one of the houses turned into a museum were kept in their primitive state the rooms of the Hanseatic merchants and those of some apprentices with the commercial books and the weights and measures of the period. A little out of the town extends the magnificent port where the Emperor William usually made long stays during his cruises in the North Sea.

When I was passing through Bergen the Imperial yacht *Hohenzollern* was lying in the harbour; on either side of her were two warships. During the preceding years the Kaiser had been accompanied by a whole squadron, which annoyed and troubled the Norwegians very much, so they voted a law that more than two foreign warships were not allowed to be together in the port of Bergen. Who knows if the English did not suggest this law to the Norwegians!

In spite of the interest of my journey I had to interrupt it, having received the news that the Grand Duchess Serge intended to visit Stockholm. She arrived just two days after my return. I saw her then for the last time, beautiful and unfortunate martyr!

In autumn I took my usual yearly holiday and returned to Russia. At my first interview with Sazonoff he again mentioned the Emperor's intention of transferring me from Stockholm to Sofia. He warned me, however, that probably some time would elapse before this could be accomplished because, as he expressed it, one could not change horses in the middle of the ford. It was necessary to await the political moment propitious for the transfer. My nomination to Bulgaria appeared one month later. I immediately returned to Sweden to present my letters of recall to the King and to take official leave.

When I reached Stockholm I wrote to the Minister for Foreign Affairs to announce my departure, and I expressed my deep regret at being obliged to break off such excellent

private relations, so happily established between us. I begged to see him and said that I should request an audience of the King when in possession of my letters of recall, which were then at Livadia awaiting the Emperor's signature. The Minister's reply reached me the same day. In most amiable terms he expressed his regrets and congratulated me at the same time on my new nomination, which proved, he said, the confidence placed in me by my Sovereign. In giving me an appointment for the following day, he promised to take the necessary steps for my audience with the King, as soon as I had my recall papers.

At our interview the Minister asked me to fix a day for myself and all the members of the Legation to lunch with him. When drinking my health he made a very kind speech, inviting me to pass by Sweden whenever I was going from Western Europe to Russia, and to take advantage for these trips of the new railway between Stockholm and St. Petersburg, the creation of which we had been working at together for some time past.

My audience of leave-taking took place with the customary ceremony and was followed by my reception by the Prince and Princess Royal, Prince and Princess Charles, etc. The night of my departure the Swedish officials, my colleagues of the Diplomatic Corps, and some personal friends came down to the landing-stage to give me a send-off.

It was a beautiful winter evening when the boat weighed anchor and involuntarily another such evening recurred to my mind—that Christmas Eve when, two years previously, I left the same landing-stage on my way back to Russia. Just as then, as the boat receded further and further from the shore, the town, illuminated by myriads of electric lights, grew gradually darker and darker and finally disappeared in the winter mist.

I arrived at St. Petersburg about Christmas-time and began at once to study the Bulgarian affairs. I also had several conversations with General Radko-Dmitrieff, who at that time was Bulgarian Minister at St. Petersburg and whose reputation and career are well known.

Being a soldier by education as well as by vocation, the General had played an important rôle during the first Balkanic war in 1912. After the defeat of Bulgaria in 1913, he temporarily accepted the post of Minister at St. Petersburg, intending to use in the interests of his country his well-known sympathies for Russia, his old connections there as well as his intimate relationship with King Ferdinand, with whom he corresponded in private code. At the outbreak of the Great War, disgusted with the strange attitude assumed by the Bulgarian Government, he resigned his diplomatic post and went as far as changing his nationality in order to join the ranks of the Russian Army. After holding high commanding posts during the war, he left the service after the Bolshevik revolution and retired to Essentouki, a watering-place in Northern Caucasus, where he was later murdered by Bolsheviks.

The first time we conversed with him, he explained at length the reasons that had led him to accept a post so out of keeping with his previous career. His chief aim was to use his personal influence to improve the relations between Bulgaria and Russia that had become strained after the fratricidal Bulgaro-Serbian war. After achieving that task he intended to return to his country and devote his efforts to bring together the numerous Bulgarian political clans and to unite them into one single National Party. He welcomed my appointment to Bulgaria and informed me that it had been approved of by the King ; he felt sure that I would strike the right note in bringing about the much-needed appeasement.

"Un homme averti en vaut deux," said he. "I should like to point out to you beforehand the questions King Ferdinand is chiefly worried with and will surely talk to you about the very first time he sees you. In the first place, the King is troubled by the personal feeling towards him of His Majesty the Emperor ; he is afraid of being treated like the Prince of Battenberg. Then he would like his eldest son, Prince Boris, to be admitted, to complete his military training, at the Military Academy of St. Petersburg. You

realize, of course, all the importance this may have in the future. After a few years spent in Russia our future King will surely have won friends in that country and establish connections that shall last for a lifetime. I know that from my own experience. Also—who knows—a more personal and intimate alliance might result from it and come to crown our wishes. But this is an exceedingly delicate question and I only mention it to you in strict confidence."

A few days later I was received by the Emperor to whom I repeated my conversation with Radko-Dmitrieff. His Majesty was greatly surprised to hear of King Ferdinand's apprehensions. "It is none of his business," said the Emperor, "what my inward feelings are towards him, but I should like him to name one single case when I have not been sufficiently nice to him. Only last year, have I not been amiable with his son at the Kiev manœuvres? Should he ask you a question of that sort please reassure him and explain to him that the idea of dethroning him never entered my head. Besides, such a proceeding would be contrary to the very principles of monarchy."

When I came to the other question, that of Prince Boris' admittance to the Academy, the Emperor grew visibly interested; he asked me whether it was Radko-Dmitrieff who had spoken to me about it, and he authorized me, should the occasion arise, to state that the Prince would be received with open arms. Who knows whether the Emperor had not at that moment thought of the same matter Radko-Dmitrieff had so discreetly alluded to? It would have been but natural, since the Emperor's godson was such a nice and charming young man.

The Emperor dismissed me very graciously, wishing me every success at my new post.

MY appointment to Bulgaria had been decided upon, in principle, since 1912, when I was Minister to Sweden. When, in December of that year, I had come on leave to St. Petersburg, Sazonoff had already told me he was sorry that I was not at Sofia. A few days later, coming from the Emperor, he sent for me and told me in great secret that His Majesty had just decided to transfer me to Bulgaria, but that the appointment could only take place at a favourable political moment. The Foreign Minister added: "You may consider the matter as definitely settled, but hold it absolutely secret; besides the Emperor, you, and myself, nobody knows anything about it."

The political events that took place in the Balkans in 1913 are still fresh in everybody's memory: the internal strife between the Bulgarians and the Serbians and the unsuccessful attempt at mediation made by Emperor Nicholas; the great activity of Austrian diplomats calculated to set both countries against each other and the brilliant result of their work; the creation of a morbid political organism, the Principality of Albania, put under the rule of a ridiculous Prince, servitor of the Germans; the enforced retrocession to Albania of Scutari, that Montenegro had taken away from Turkey, and the rôle of Russia who, together with Austria, insisted upon that retrocession, delegating the French naval squadron to represent the Russian flag in Montenegrin waters and to take part in the naval demonstration; the appointment to Constantinople of a German Field-Marshal; and at last the fratricidal war between Bulgaria and Serbia, so much desired by Austria and Germany, and its outcome—the Treaty of Bucharest (July 28,

1913), depriving Bulgaria of the fruits of her brilliant victories in 1912 and installing in power Radoslavoff's pro-German Cabinet.

Such was the balance-sheet of our Balkanic policy in 1913, a result more than unsatisfactory even from a not over-pessimistic point of view.

Before taking up my new post I had repeatedly drawn Sazonoff's attention upon the delicate situation in which I should be placed. As a matter of fact I was being accredited to a Sovereign who immediately after the downfall of a pro-Russian Cabinet had called upon another one which openly gravitated towards Germany and Austria, and this at a moment when the country was suffering from the consequences of an unsuccessful war and from the decisions of the ensuing Conference of Bucharest, the responsibility for which was—no matter whether rightly or wrongly—attributed to Russia by the Bulgarian public opinion.

The Minister did not deny the delicacy of the task I had before me. In order to encourage me he said he felt sure that I would find the right tone in my conversations with King Ferdinand and his Ministers. Using his last argument, he said: "In any case if we had fresh difficulties with Bulgaria, and if I ventured some day to blame you for it, you may always return the shot; for never have I had so many failures with anybody as with the Bulgarians in 1913." These frank and sincere words comforted me to a certain extent. But one could see that our Ministry for Foreign Affairs did realize how difficult the political situation actually was; this is why, contrary to the established custom, I received no written instructions. The verbal directions that were given to me amounted to the following: "I was to stand aloof from the Radoslavoff Government and to wait for its downfall; if I could manage to assist in its overthrow without any risk of exposure, that would be still better; after that negotiations with the Bulgarians could be resumed again."

"More ample instructions shall be given you in connection with the new questions that may arise," added the Minister;

" if, however, you were in doubt and wanted to discuss *viva voce* some problem on hand, you may always come for a few days to St. Petersburg, it is such a short distance."

On January 8 (21) I took the Cannes express. After a short stop at Vienna, I arrived in Belgrade, where Sazonoff had asked me to have a talk with Mr. Pashitch and to get in touch with Mr. Hartwig, our Minister to Serbia, in order to agree upon the line of conduct we should follow in our corresponding activities.

I did not see Mr. Pashitch in Belgrade as he had just left for Russia with Prince Alexander to attend the baptism of the son of Prince John and Princess Helene. As to Hartwig, I found him in rather a nervous state. He had wanted to accompany Prince Alexander to Russia and had applied to the Ministry for the permission, but as yet no reply had been given. Knowing what Sazonoff thought of Hartwig's impetuous temperament, I suspected that the Minister did not wish to have him in St. Petersburg at the same time as Prince Alexander and Mr. Pashitch. The subsequent talks I had with my Belgrade colleague confirmed my supposition.

After a two days' stop at Belgrade, I reached Sofia on January 14 (27).

In the present narrative I shall try to describe the state of things and the disposition of minds that I found on my arrival in Bulgaria; I will also relate day by day the efforts I made in order to improve the situation, and especially to separate Bulgaria from Germany and bring her back to Russia's side. Still, the principal object of the present narrative is to make public, at last, the political negotiations that were conducted between St. Petersburg and Sofia from the day the World War broke out and up to our rupture with Bulgaria.

It is true that our Ministry for Foreign Affairs did publish in due time "Orange Books" concerning our negotiations and consecutive ruptures with Germany, Austria, and Turkey. But these ruptures were much more readily intelligible for the general public than the war that Slavic Bulgaria came to wage against her great Deliverer. Besides

nobody knows until now the exact course our negotiations with the Sofia Government have followed, nor just why, and under what conditions, they arrived at an open breach. Owing to special reasons, the collection of documents relating to that question have never been published, although the public opinion in Slavic countries, and especially the conscience of the Russian people, still feel uneasy at the thought of such an inexplicable and monstrous war. Neither was any light thrown upon this subject when the head of the Russian foreign policy spoke of it before the Douma in February, 1916. He only stated in his speech that our Balkanic Policy had not led to satisfactory results. Strange as it may seem, that summary statement satisfied at the time the representatives of the people and the principal questioner, Mr. Miliukoff, did not insist upon the subject.

At the present time it is materially impossible to reconstruct the events upon a documentary basis, the archives of our Legation in Sofia having been burned by Ministerial order at the moment of our departure ; whereas the documents preserved at St. Petersburg were pilfered, mixed up, and ruined by the Bolsheviks.

It is lucky, therefore, that I succeeded in preserving my note-book which I had endeavoured to keep up to date and which contains the political correspondence relating to the period in question. Unfortunately it does not represent a regular record with all pieces chronologically arranged and numbered ; anyway my diary, which cannot and need not be kept secret any longer, shall certainly furnish authentic material ample enough to convey an exact idea of the way things happened.

There were various reasons and scruples that prevented in due time the official publication of documents so eagerly claimed for by public opinion. There was the fear of hurting the feelings of some of our allies, whose part in the Bulgarian question, as we shall see below, was neither set nor clear ; there also was the desire to avoid calling it by its real name the attitude of the utter intractability assumed by the Serbians ; the necessity to acknowledge our own weakness,

as well as the personal feelings of mistrust which Emperor Nicholas and his entourage professed towards King Ferdinand.

Neither of these reasons exist any longer, and this is the reason why I venture to publish the facts. But before proceeding any further I would like to make it clear that if the Allies' policy in Bulgaria had been different the worldly aspect of things would also be different from what we see at present: the World War would have been really won, which is to say that our enemies would have been truly defeated and routed on the battlefields, and it would have been impossible for them to behave towards the Allies the way they have done ever since the Versailles Treaty.

As to Russia, after a real victory that would have enhanced the prestige of the Imperial Government, the sinister subversive forces at play would never have been able to accomplish their pernicious and disruptive work in the country; to wit, the perfidious words of Miliukoff uttered by him at the beginning of his destructive activity: "We must extort from the government all possible concessions before the final victory, because after it we could never succeed."

Daring as my assertions may appear at first sight, especially since it is now impossible to prove their accuracy, I still insist upon my opinion, my argumentation being as follows.

In spite of King Ferdinand's German sympathies and the venality of the Bulgarian Government then in power, the entire country was essentially pro-Russian; no one, not even the Germans nor their tributaries—the Bulgarian Ministers—could admit of the possibility of a war against Russia: since July 19 (August 1), the day when war was declared by Germany, I continually received from the remotest corners of the country letters of the warmest sympathy and sums collected in obscure villages; such contributions were accompanied by wishes of success for our army, touchingly expressed: "May this money, collected among us after prayers for Russian success, be of assistance to the grandsons of our deliverers." The Germans knew very well which way the sympathies of the Bulgarian

nation went and dared not ask them to side openly against Russia. According to the common saying : " the Bulgarians' rifles could not go off against their liberators." The utmost the Germans could demand from the Bulgarians was to attack the Serbians, promising them in the meantime that they would never have to fight the Russians. Such a state of mind of the Bulgarians was the chief trump card in our game.

Another one was to be found in the Macedonian committees. The part played at all times by Macedonians in Bulgarian history is well known. Being a turbulent and active race, much more energetic and vital than the Bulgarians, they always had the upper hand with them. How often did Bulgarian statesmen come and talk to me, bitterly complaining against the Macedonians, their intrigues and their pretensions, chronically perturbing the peaceful life of the young Bulgarian State and weighing heavily upon its economic welfare. Nevertheless, the energy of the Macedonians, their contempt of danger and death, always made them succeed in imposing their will on the Bulgarians. They compelled them to bear in mind the interests of Macedonia and to uphold a close union between Bulgaria and the Macedonian provinces. A great number of Bulgarian Ministers, the famous Stambouloff among them, were Macedonians by birth. Our clumsy policy, aided by German intrigues, had ended in making Stambouloff and his party bitter enemies of Russia. Nevertheless, since the outbreak of the war members of the Central Macedonian Committee constantly came to see me, often by night, fearing to be seen entering the Russian Legation. They implored me to persuade the Russian Government to make in Sofia, in relation to Macedonian territories, formal promises to which in their opinion no Bulgarian Government could resist. Dr. Vladoff, the President of the Central Committee, once told me : " If only you succeed in obtaining for Bulgaria the Macedonian territories which should be hers according to the Bulgaro-Serbian agreement of 1912, the whole country will be up in arms and fight at your side.

Should the Government try and oppose us, we would force them to desist ; as to the King, we, who have more than once faced death, would not hesitate to do away with him should he attempt to thwart our political ambitions. If only we obtain what we want, no Government will be able to resist us, while every motive for a war against Serbia will have been removed. Together with the Serbians we shall aid you to take Constantinople."

All such unusual utterances, that could only be heard in the East, I faithfully transmitted to St. Petersburg, adding that Dr. Vladoff was not the only one to speak that way ; that the most influential members of the Central Committee, such as Protogueroff, the *âme damnée* of King Ferdinand, and Totchkoff, the recognized German agent, also used to come to me, trying to find out what advantages Bulgaria could gain by entering the war on our side. Besides the Macedonian question, the most burning of all, there also were other ones, equally interesting for the Bulgarians, the solution of which could induce them to take part in the war. Such was the restitution to Bulgaria of territories in the Dobrudja with an almost exclusive Bulgarian population which had been given to Roumania in 1913 ; there was also the rectification of the Bulgarian frontier in Thrace.

All such questions provided a very good foundation for profitable negotiations with Bulgaria. Had we availed ourselves of them and persuaded Bulgaria to take up arms at the very outset of the war, the hesitation of Roumania and Greece would have been overcome at once, since Bulgaria's geographical position alone would have weighed heavily enough upon her neighbours not to allow them to stay neutral. All the peninsular states being thus on our side, our success over the Austrians in Transylvania and the taking of Constantinople by us would have been assured. The fall of the Ottoman capital would not only have meant for us one enemy less to fight against ; it would also have meant the opening of the Straits and a guaranteed uninterrupted supply of arms and munitions in return for the corn Russia could then easily ship to France and England. Now

it is well known that the natural trade route being closed, Russia had been obliged to build during the war a new railway line to the north ; that line ran over marshy ground, and owing to that fact and climatic conditions, it had a limited transporting capacity, had taken a long time to build, and could only be used during the short summer months. If Russia had had in due time all the needed quantity of arms, munitions, and other war materials, her victory would have been assured. A victory on the front would have made it impossible for Russia's internal foes to carry out their destructive and criminal work ; at least they would not have succeeded in it. In such conditions Russia would have fulfilled her obligations towards her allies and remained greater and more prosperous than ever.

Such would have been, according to my firmest conviction, the outcome of Bulgaria's entry into the war at the side of the Entente. The Germans were well aware of it, this is why they struggled so fiercely to wrench from our hands what they felt was ours by right.

Owing to the irony of fate, the eventual power I ascribe to Bulgaria—that of turning the scales at the beginning of the war—was manifested by her later, at the very end of the great struggle. As a matter of fact it is Bulgaria who gave, so to speak, the first signal of the end. Her army refused to continue the fight and surrendered to the Allies at Krivolak, an action which in its turn determined the Turks to conclude a separate peace. Pressed by the Allies on one side and abandoned by their acolytes on the other, the Germans were forced to beg for an armistice.

It will perhaps be remembered that during the peace negotiations at Neuilly, while pleading the interests of their country, the Bulgarian delegates tried to use the fact of its surrender at Krivolak as a claim in their favour, explaining that they had thus been instrumental in bringing the final victory to the Allies.

But to take up the course of my narration.

When I arrived at Sofia I at once asked for an audience ; the King answered through Radoslavoff that he could only

receive me after January 20, pretexting that on the 18th he was going to Philippopolis for the anniversary of his first wife's death and that the 20th was his son Boris's birthday. I peremptorily declared to Radoslavoff, as well as to Dobrovitch, the Chief of the King's Privy Cabinet, that I did not consider the reasons given as serious enough to delay my reception for such a long time.

The audience took place on the 17th.

During my first visit to Radoslavoff, upon the day of my arrival, I noticed on his part an intentional reserve, even a calculated coldness. While speaking of the disaster that had befallen Bulgaria, he more than clearly hinted that all that had happened with our consent; he added that at the present time Bulgaria had only one thing to do—to keep quiet “in order to save the country from the danger it was running so closely; the Government must therefore pursue a national policy based on real interests.” I made to Sazonoff a detailed report of that conversation in a letter dated January 19.

The same complaint was made to me by the King during my first audience, as well as by the Bulgarian politicians, even those who were considered as thoroughly pro-Russian. They quite openly stated that all Bulgaria's misfortunes had been brought about by the fact that Russia had not chosen to put in a word in favour of Bulgaria at the Bucharest Conference.

In answer to such statements I informed the King, Radoslavoff, and as a matter of fact all concerned, that what had happened had come to pass because Bulgaria had been too much spoiled by Russia in bygone days; having got used to be treated with unlimited indulgence, the Bulgarians had come to imagine that they could disobey with impunity even the words of the Emperor which he had uttered from his throne under such unusual conditions. I was alluding to the telegrams the Emperor had personally addressed to King Peter and King Ferdinand on May 26, 1913:

“I deem it necessary to declare,” telegraphed the Emperor, “that the first State that will begin the war shall

be responsible to the Slavic world, and in such a case I consider myself at full liberty to determine the attitude of Russia in regard to the possible consequences of such a culpable strife."

I explained to my Bulgarian interlocutors that since Bulgaria had been guilty of the criminal and perfidious act of June 16 (when the Bulgarians attacked the Serbians), she was to bear the consequences thereof.

If I dwell at some length upon the attitude towards Russia that prevailed at the time in governmental and political circles and at the Court of Sofia, I only do so in order to show the difficult situation the Russian representative had to face. It was only after arriving in the country that I realized how much the reality surpassed all my previous apprehensions and most daring previsions. Quite involuntarily I recalled the words Isvolsky, my former chief, said to me in Paris at the time of my appointment to Sofia, when I hesitated whether to accept the post: "Our relations with Bulgaria could not be worse than they are; every improvement will therefore be to your credit. In such conditions, if I were you, I should not hesitate; it is even very interesting."

As soon as I arrived at Sofia, I had started with ardour and decision to look for an issue from the awkward situation I had found. When presenting my letters-patent to the King, I said to him: "I am coming to your country at a very difficult moment, when all the forces of Bulgaria must be centred upon the work of regeneration. . . . I venture, Your Majesty, to express the hope to find your support, frankness, and confidence, the precious and indispensable guarantees of success in the work to which henceforward I am going to devote all my forces. . . ."

The King listened attentively to my speech, and the local Press commented upon it in favourable terms. Here is an abstract from a letter dated January 19, in which I reported to Sazonoff the results of my first audience:

"After the exchange of official speeches, the King complained that lately he had been cut off from the entire world,

that he had no news from anybody, that he even did not know how the Emperor was, and he asked me if I had seen His Majesty before my departure. He evidently wanted to know what were the Emperor's personal feelings towards him. As His Majesty, when giving me his latest instructions, had not entrusted me with any personal message, I took the opportunity to say that a few days ago the Emperor had authorized me to transmit him the following: Very often the advice of the Imperial Government had not been followed at Sofia; even the Emperor's own words addressed to the King in May last had produced no effect whatever; each time the Bulgarian Government had the least cause to be dissatisfied, they threatened to join the opposite side, and they had finished by doing so, with disastrous results."

At that moment the King interrupted me, murmuring: "Ah yes, what a disaster."

"Nevertheless," I continued, "I am authorized by my August Master to state that his feelings towards the Bulgarian nation could not be altered: Russia and her Sovereign were, and would remain, the traditional friends of Bulgaria who could always count upon their support, on the one condition of coming towards them frankly and honestly. On Russia's part there could be no feeling of anger nor revenge towards Bulgaria; a maternal attitude was the only possible one."

The King said how pleased and happy he was to hear that; that it was just the sort of language that had been failing him of late; and that he would avail himself of the occasion that further conversations with me would provide to try and dispel the prejudices that he felt existed against him in Russia.

Recalling the period when Mr. Bakhmeteff was accredited to his person, the King said that since that time he had never been able to talk open-heartedly with the representative of Russia. He expressed his pleasure at having once more someone he could speak to with confidence. I seized this opportunity to state that I hoped the King would allow me to be perfectly frank with him and to discuss openly with him every matter I would feel uncertain or anxious about. "Straightforward and honest dealings," I

added, "are the only possible, as well as practicable ones, especially so in view of the influence Your Majesty has over the political life of the country."

The King stated with bitterness that the influence he had once enjoyed had now vanished ; that he was the object of violent attacks, that the men of the Government were his only supporters, for which reason he could not do without them. Now it is well known that these are the same men who signed the famous letter advising the King to turn away from Russia and to side with Austria. That letter, dated June 26, 1913, was signed by Radoslavoff, Tontcheff, and Ghennadieff.

Winking in the direction of Radoslavoff, who during the audience had been sitting silently on his left, the King said, in the blank tone of an actor's "aside": "This one, sitting on my left—he does not understand French—you should not misjudge him ; he looks vulgar and rough, but he is honest (?) and devoted to the country."

I understood very well what he meant ; but thinking it was unnecessary to discuss the question there and then, I only remarked that a country's inner affairs, party quarrels, etc., were things which the Russian representative should not and would not interfere with, but that Russia had a right to demand that the Bulgarian Government inspire her confidence by being politically honest.

After that exchange of views the King looked at me scrutinizingly and made the question I had been expecting : "It appears that you have been travelling by stages?"

I hastily answered how pleased I was he had broached the subject, because otherwise I should have done it myself to say that under orders of my Government I had indeed stopped at Belgrade where my purpose was, neither more nor less, than to defend Bulgarian interests. "As a matter of fact," I said, "Your Majesty's Minister at St. Petersburg had asked me to use my influence in order to mitigate the treatment Bulgarians suffered at the hands of the Serbians in the Macedonian provinces lately ceded to Serbia." At that point the King lost control of himself and indulged in

a flow of bitter language directed against the Serbians and their cruelty towards the Macedonian population. The acerbity of his tone clearly showed that the wound was still sore and had to be handled with great care.

When dismissing me the King asked me to convey to His Majesty the Emperor his most respectful feelings and to tell him how happy he had been to hear the words of which I was the bearer.

It would be difficult to reproduce exactly the entire conversation. I only wish to point out its demonstratively amiable, even friendly character ; each time a fresh political question was touched upon the King promised to take it up again at the next occasion in order to pour out to the last drop the apprehensions and doubts that were assailing him.

"I do not take literally King Ferdinand's words," I added in my letter to Sazonoff ; "however, I think it would be really useful and important if he really wished to enter into regular contact with me. Whatever he said to me, he still has an enormous influence upon the affairs. It is highly probable, however, that after to-day's amiability, evidently calculated to atone for the bad impressions of some time ago, he will once more draw back into his shell."

Soon after that first conversation with the King I had another one. February 5 being the anniversary of the death of Grand Duke Vladimir, whom the King had always considered as a personal friend, the King ordered special prayers to be said in the chapel of the palace and invited me to attend. After the Divine Service he asked me to follow him to his private apartments, saying that at our first meeting he had not had the time to tell me even one half of what he had on his mind, and that he wanted to inquire about a lot of things that had not as much as been mentioned during our first conversation.

"Sit down at my great-grandmother's feet," he said, as we entered his study, and he pointed to a sofa over which hung the portrait of one of the Princesses of the House of Orleans, "and let us talk like friends. Do tell me frankly, what is it they reproach me with in Russia, what do they accuse

me of? Was the Emperor displeased with my telegram? But before sending it I showed it to Mr. Nekludoff who, in his own handwriting, added the phrase which the Council of Ministers unanimously approved of, but which seemingly brought upon me the Emperor's displeasure. I hear they also reproach me for my visits to my estates in Hungary; and when I am in Vienna and go to see the old Emperor they suspect me of foul play. How can they not understand that after this prison of Sofia, I need a breath of fresh air, some relaxation for my overstrung nerves. . . ."

It would take too long to reproduce here all that the King told me that day with his usual eloquence. When he had finished I warned him that I would take advantage of his permission and speak perfectly frankly. I did not conceal from him that his telegram had displeased and pained His Majesty. In his constant solicitude for the Slavs in general and for Bulgaria in particular, the Emperor could not as much as admit the possibility of a fratricidal war. When he resorted to such an extreme and unusual step as a personal telegram, Emperor Nicholas solely acquitted himself of a moral obligation without any thought of the political aims which so often prompt the actions of others. This was why he was so hurt to see his advice disregarded and the disastrous consequences that followed, to the great joy of Austria who had insidiously pushed Bulgaria against Serbia.

At this point the King interrupted me and tried to make me believe that Austria had nothing to do with the matter, but that it was Bulgaria who could no longer stand Serbia's provocation. "Even if we admit for one moment that Your Majesty's assertions are correct," said I, "it would still be impossible to deny Austria's jubilation at seeing the unity of the Slavs go asunder. Bulgaria's insane action can never be excused; if at the time it could perhaps be explained by the general effervescence prevailing at the moment, Bulgaria's present attitude is still inexcusable: crushed and unhappy, she goes over to the side of Austria, the worst enemy of the Slavic nations; instead of dismissing the Ministers who had dared to suggest such a treacherous policy, Your Majesty

keeps them in power. How can Your Majesty expect all this not to produce in Russia a disheartening impression ? ” In reply to these words the King engaged upon a vicious criticism of those Bulgarian statesmen who were regarded as pro-Russian in their sympathies.

“ All these people want to dethrone me, they openly preach republicanism ; they are the enemies of any kind of order and foment disturbances ; only look at the state in which our officers’ corps is at present, and our army. . . . If Russia desires internal upheavals in Bulgaria, if she wishes me to be dethroned, she has only to support these enemies of their own country. If only the next election give a majority to the opposition, it will be the signal of departure for myself and my dynasty. Is that what His Majesty the Emperor desires ? Do they, in Russia, want things to come to that ? ”

I replied to the King that nobody in Russia even thought of a *coup d’état* in Bulgaria ; but that, indeed, the present Bulgarian Government did not inspire in us any confidence. That, as I had already stated, I had no intention whatever to interfere with the internal affairs of Bulgaria and her people, but that, on the other hand, I could not renounce to keep up relations with the representatives of all the Bulgarian political parties, being convinced that there were no real Russophobes in Bulgaria and there could not be any. “ Should the next elections prove unfavourable for the Government party, in Your Majesty’s place I should not hesitate to call upon the opposition parties and to form a Coalition Cabinet. You cannot reckon without the Russian public opinion, nor forget that Russia has her own political tasks which exceed all others in importance ; that is what the Bulgarians have so often overlooked.”

The King listened attentively. When I had finished he said : “ Believe me, no one has, nor could have confidence in Austria. Emperor William hates me personally ; besides he is entirely pro-Greek since the time when his sister became Queen of the Hellenes. Still it is possible to arrive at an understanding with him, whereas an agreement with

Vienna is utterly impossible; you, too, know it from experience. Believe me, no one here so much as thinks of Austria."

My answer was that I should be too glad to believe all that I had just heard, especially since it would be but natural and logical; I regretted to see, however, that the facts were quite different.

"Until Your Majesty can give me irrefutable proof confirming your words, I shall not even trouble to report them to my Government. In spite of all that has happened, Russia does not deny her assistance, neither to Your Majesty, nor to Bulgaria; but words are not sufficient, she needs proofs and actions."

To go back a little, it should be stated here that the King had accused our representatives at Constantinople and Bucharest of having pushed the Turks in 1913 against Adrianople and the Roumanians against Sofia. I easily refuted that legend and even emphasized the tempering influence exercised by Schebeko, then Russian Minister to Roumania, who had been instructed by our Government to put a stop to the advance upon Sofia of the Prince Royal's troops. The King pretended never to have heard of it. Before dismissing me he gratefully acknowledged Russia's attitude during the Kavala incident, but did not conceal his disappointment at the attribution of Samothrace to Greece.

When I reported this interview to the Minister I could not refrain from adding the following conclusions: "Failing to find any Austrian sympathies in his country which was once more directing her hopes towards Russia, the King would have nothing against dissolving the present Government; but seeing that it consisted of men *sans foi ni loi*, he feared for his own safety if he parted with them, especially since he did not see any strong enough men among the opposition. However, if the Government party came to be beaten at the elections, the King would not even think of abdicating, but would light-heartedly hand the power to one of the leaders of the opposition; when he referred to the latter he mentioned Malinoff with a certain deference.

If the King's choice fell upon the leader of the ' Democrats,' we ought to be satisfied."

It was evident to me that it would take a good amount of hard and assiduous work to regain the influence we had lost and bring Bulgaria back to Russia.

The first days after my arrival I had innumerable conversations with politicians belonging both to the Governmental party and to the opposition. I endeavoured to show them how wrong the direction was which Radoslavoff's Government was following; I even succeeded in convincing some of them. But I saw distinctly that this was not sufficient and that more efficacious means would have to be used.

Two things were quite clear: the impossibility of conforming myself to the Ministerial instructions and to stand aloof from the present Austrophile Government in expectation of its downfall; and the necessity of using the Press, a means of action still more powerful in Bulgaria than anywhere else.

While observing the strenuous and persistent activity in that field of the Austrians and the Germans, I saw very well that if I did not oppose them a counter-activity just as energetic, the Radoslavoff Government, far from falling, would only gain in strength. I therefore wrote, on March 5, to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs that, "apart from the negative results that a policy of abstention might bring about for us in the future, such a policy did at present put the Russian representative into the impossible situation of a mere observer of the growth of German influence in a country that had been brought to life by Russia and freely steeped in the blood of her sons."

As soon as I had arrived at Sofia, I instantly requested to be allowed to establish a contact with the Radoslavoff Government: "I felt sure that by working slowly and systematically we could succeed in proving even to the actual Bulgarian Government that Bulgaria will never find happiness in communion with Austria, but only in a new *rapprochement* with us. If I undertake to work together with the Radoslavoff Government, it is because of my conviction that there

are no real Russophobes in Bulgaria, and there never could be any. Those who hoisted these colours only did so in order to emphasize their separateness from the party of Daneff whose policy was styled "Russophile," and who had owned before the house that his policy had been a failure. However, should the Imperial Government prefer to stand apart, it would then be more dignified to recall the Minister and to leave in his place a *chargé d'affaires* to manage the current affairs."

As to the Press, I knew that the Germans and the Austrians had several newspapers at their disposal, and that they spent very considerable sums of money for the propagation of their ideas throughout the Balkanic States. Being anxious to win for us the sympathies of one of the existing newspapers, or still better to create a new one, I drew the attention of the Ministry upon the importance of that question and asked for credits for that purpose, however modest.

Apart from that it was quite clear to me that the most powerful weapon our enemies could use in order to subjugate Bulgaria, was the loan which they wanted at any cost to press upon the country. After two consecutive wars, the Bulgarian Treasury was empty, and the Government wanted funds to keep the State machinery going: to put the railways in order and to repair the rolling-stock, to build new lines in the newly acquired territories, to develop the harbour at Lagos, pay the arrears of salary to officers and soldiers, the pensions of war-widows, etc.

The first steps for raising a loan were taken by the Bulgarians in March, 1914. Judging from the nervousness displayed in that occurrence by the German and Austrian Legations and their numerous acolytes, I soon realized that the loan was going to represent much more than a mere financial transaction; it was calculated to exploit Bulgaria and to subjugate her politically, at the same time offering her but the minimum of material advantages.

Knowing, through my agents, how hard for the Bulgarians and dangerous for us were the conditions, as well economic and financial as political, that were going to be imposed, I

sent a series of most alarming letters and telegrams drawing the Ministry's attention to the "political serfdom" that was being prepared for Bulgaria. I insistently requested my Government not to let the Germans triumph, and to arrange for Bulgaria a Franco-Russian loan at less severe conditions. I spent three months warning the Government against the impending danger and suggesting different modes of procedure. But the Foreign Affairs only replied: "The Radoslavoff Government does not inspire us any confidence; you know well under what conditions a loan to Bulgaria could be granted; unless these conditions are fulfilled (a change of Cabinet), we see no reason for altering our attitude."

On June 2 Sazonoff came to Bucharest after having accompanied Emperor Nicholas on his visit to King Charles of Roumania at Costanza. I took hold of the opportunity to write him once more and sent to him one of my collaborators. I made a serious effort to prove to him how essential it was for us not to allow the Bulgarians' loan to be contracted in Berlin. Imbued with that thought and fearing lest Sazonoff's desire for a *rapprochement* with Roumania should lead him to lose sight of Bulgaria, I wrote to him, among other things: ". . . While fully realizing how greatly important it would be for us to separate Roumania from the Triple Alliance, I still hold that *Bulgaria's political orientation cannot be a matter of indifference for us*, and this not solely because of our traditional relations with her. Indeed, *in the case, always to be feared, of a great political conflagration which would necessarily put Russia and Austria in opposite camps, Bulgaria's attitude should be far from indifferent to us*. . . . Austria's purpose is clear: her chief aim is to foster permanent dissensions between the Balkanic States; this is a matter of self-protection that Austria has successfully practised for a very long time. Some time before June 16 (the day when the Bulgarians fell upon the Serbians), she had touched the tender point of the Bulgarians by inciting them against the Serbians; she will do the same in case of fresh complications *and be*

careful to indicate 'in a friendly spirit' to Bulgaria the convenient moment for taking Macedonia away from Serbia ; in this way she will protect herself against Serbia and at the same time feel securer against us. How much stronger would our position be if, at the moment of such complications, we could be sure of the active support of Bulgaria and Serbia ? ”

At the end of the letter I once more pointed out the necessity of preventing at any cost the German loan : “ the present circumstances are such that Bulgaria may be thrown for a long time into the arms of the Triple Alliance and we shall take the blame for not having done anything to prevent it from happening.”

The conditions of the loan the Germans wanted to enforce were really Draconian :

1. The right to construct the railway-line from Haskovo to Lagos, the newly acquired Bulgarian port on the Ægean.
2. The construction of the port of Lagos.
3. A fifty-year concession for the working of the coal and copper mines of Pernik and Bobov-Dol.
4. The monopoly of tobacco in the exceedingly rich new territories acquired by the Bulgarians.

All these conditions were of high importance both from a political and economic point of view. Had they been accepted and enforced, Bulgaria within a period of ten years would have become a German province ; given the methodical character of the Germans, it could not have been otherwise. Seeing whither their policy in the Balkans was leading, I wanted to draw Sazonoff's attention to it in a letter dated May 16 :

“ A systematic conquest of the Near East in general, and of Bulgaria in particular, forms part of Germany's quite definite plan. They already have installed Sanders-Pasha on the Bosphorous and now they are impudently stretching out their hands towards Constantinople, and this from both sides, in Thrace as well as in Asia Minor. . . . They do all they can to induce Bulgaria to arrive at an understanding with Turkey.



THE EMPEROR AND EMPRESS OF RUSSIA WITH THEIR FAMILY ON A VISIT TO KING CHARLES OF ROMANIA
The Emperor King, and Empress of Russia with their family

... Bulgaria is thus being pushed towards the brink of a precipice. It is incumbent upon us, for the sake of our traditional policy, as well as in regard of our most vital interests, not to allow the Austro-German plan to be realized."

In the same letter of May 16, I reported to the Minister the arrival in Sofia of the Duke Johann-Albert of Mecklenburg-Schwerin :

" The arrival in Sofia of that prince is full of significance because his ability has often been used by the German Emperor for delicate and important missions. His arrival coincides with the moment when the Bulgarian rulers are hesitating whether to bind their country's fate with that of the Triple Alliance, which finds no sympathy whatever among the people, or to remain faithful to the traditional friendship with Russia. The Duke's arrival just at this moment provides matter for reflection."

A few days later, in the above-mentioned letter of June 1, addressed to Sazonoff at Bucharest, I also wrote :

" It would be blindness to deny the tremendous importance of the step Bulgaria is taking at the present moment. The insistence, I should rather say the passion, displayed by the Austrians and the Germans in the question of the loan clearly shows their interest in drawing Bulgaria into the orbit of the Triple Alliance, especially now that Roumania seems to be escaping their influence."

That letter to Bucharest succeeded at last in persuading Sazonoff to authorize me to propose a Russian loan to the Radoslavoff Government. But it was already too late. Radoslavoff and Tontcheff, the Minister for Finance, had gone too far in committing themselves towards Berlin and were bound by formal promises to the Germans ; the latter had taken care, while we hesitated, to interest them personally in the financial transaction. The Bulgarian Ministers were now afraid to go back, and the representatives of French banks, whom I had summoned in haste from Paris, were received politely, but left without having arrived at anything.

The conditions upon which the French banks were willing to negotiate the loan included no political obligations and were financially less burdensome than the German ones. I had taken care to give them a wide publicity. In order to frustrate me, Radoslavoff resorted to a dishonest subterfuge : his officious paper published, instead of the new conditions of the French banks, old ones, which had been offered several years ago and were harder than the present ones.

As the loan negotiations proceeded further, my apprehensions went on growing, and I wrote to Sazonoff on April 16 : " I find that the present moment is particularly serious and I have worked out a plan of action. But I cannot proceed with its execution without the Emperor's approval and your permission."

Sazonoff was at that time in the Crimea with His Majesty. I recalled the words he said when I was leaving for Bulgaria, allowing me to come over, in case of doubt, and to discuss things personally with him ; I therefore requested to be allowed to come and submit my plans in order to obtain the necessary instructions. But the permission was declined under the pretext of " the comment which might arise from the simultaneous presence in Yalta of the Ottoman Delegation and the Russian Minister to Bulgaria ; such a coincidence might be interpreted as preparations for a *rapprochement* between Bulgaria and Turkey, carried out with the participation and protection of Russia."

Personally I thought that this reason was hardly sound. Indeed, would it not have been quite natural for me to take advantage of Yalta's proximity and to come and discuss with the Minister the serious situation obtaining at that moment ? Besides, what harm would there be if the Turkish-Bulgarian *rapprochement* (of which, by the way, there was no question then), were attained under our patronage, instead of being arranged a few months later by the Germans ? Again, if comments were to be avoided, was it not easy to arrange it so that my visit should not be simultaneous with that of the Turkish Delegation that came

each time the Emperor was in the Crimea and usually did not stay more than two days ?

Nothing remained to be done, however, but to submit to the Minister's decision and to despatch to Yalta one of my colleagues with a personal letter to Sazonoff and a memorandum containing the measures I suggested necessary. Among other things I wrote : " Should Bulgaria pass over to the Austro-German camp, that action would predetermine the character of her future relations with Serbia. In case of complications this would be against the interests of Russia, these being, in that occurrence, to see Bulgaria and Serbia united and acting conjointly."

The plan referred to above consisted in having at the psychological moment a decisive and exhaustive explanation with the King and to present to him the following suggestions :

1. To part with a Government headed by politicians who had deliberately advised the King to turn away from Russia and to cast Bulgaria's lot with that of the Central Powers.
2. To repudiate, frankly and loyally, the political programme of June 23, which had led to a war with Bulgaria's old allies, the Serbians.
3. To take the following steps :
 - (a) To make it up with Serbia.
 - (b) To allow the Emperor's godson, the Prince Royal, to go and study at the Russian Military Academy, the Emperor having consented to it, on principle, at my request.
 - (c) To consecrate the St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Sofia, which had been erected by the Bulgarian Nation as a token of gratitude to Russia for the liberation war of 1877-78, and
 - (d) To abandon the " personal régime " which the King practised on an extensive scale in spite of the Bulgarian Constitution, the most liberal in Europe.

Sazonoff instructed the Director of his Chancery to reply to that letter, and Schilling wrote to me accordingly on

May 12 that my "programme had been submitted to the Emperor ; that some of its paragraphs had met with sympathetic approval, whereas some others aroused certain doubts as to their opportunity, one of these being the one concerning King Ferdinand's *amende honorable*. Sazonoff thought that, even if the King yielded to it, that would not prevent him from secretly binding himself still more closely with the Austrians. As to my suggestion of preventing the Bulgarian loan from being concluded in Germany, Schilling wrote me that this matter stood quite differently, that the Minister had entirely adopted my point of view in the question and had done all in his power to support it in Paris as well as in London.

A fortnight after despatching my courier to Yalta, I wrote to Sazonoff on May 2 :

" . . . It seems as if I have appreciated to its full value the importance of the present political moment. When I was requesting the permission to come over and converse with you personally, as well as when I sent to the Crimea my secret letter to you, I was acting merely under the impression that we might let slip the psychological moment and that the Austrians might profit by it. It now looks as if they were attaching to the present moment as great an importance as I did. Among others, I see a proof of this in the words recently used by Count Berchtold at the Delegations,¹ when speaking of Bulgaria, as well as in the insistence with which he spoke there of a new grouping of Balkanic States, headed by Turkey and favourably disposed towards Austria. According to him, Bulgaria would also take part in it. This would estrange her still more from Russia and definitely place her within the orbit of the Triple Alliance. In that respect the secret audience given to the Austrian Minister, who was summoned to the Palace together with Radoslavoff, is also full of significance. That reception took place a few days ago and remains unknown to the public at large ; to me, it seems to prove beyond doubt that the Austrians find the present moment convenient to imply a decisive turn to their Bulgarian policy. It is just after that audience that

¹ Special Parliamentary Commissions in Austria-Hungary, composed of Austrian and Hungarian representatives.

the question of the loan has begun to progress rapidly and the conditions of the financial transactions are being ever more clearly defined."

I added in the same letter that, owing to the steady and energetic work of the Germans, our prestige in Bulgaria was perceptibly on the decline and that we were ourselves slowly but surely wasting the enormous moral capital we had accumulated in the country since the emancipation war. In order to counterbalance the German influence, I suggested to Sazonoff a series of measures that I believed could serve that end :

1. An increase of the activity of our Consular Service.
2. The immediate establishment of new Consular offices in the newly acquired territories.
3. The speedy appointment to Sofia of a new Commercial Attaché, a man of sufficient energy and enterprise to enliven our commerce with Bulgaria.
4. The establishment all over the country of Russian financial and credit institutions, as a means of promoting Russian influence.
5. The encouragement of mutual intercourse of every description between the two countries, as scientific and educational excursions for young people, of lectures, both scientific and artistic, of exhibitions of art and industry, popular courses, theatres, etc.

The questions of consular service and financial institutions were presented in the shape of complete studies with special attention given to technical details ; besides that I encouraged the Bulgarian financiers and manufacturers to travel in Russia and in France.

The bill concerning the German loan was submitted to the Chamber of Representatives on July 2. The Government understood fully that the representatives would not approve of the burdensome conditions of that transaction which were to bring the country for many years to come into a state of complete political and economic bondage. They accordingly took all measures in order to shuffle off

all the Parliamentary proceedings demanded by the Constitution : the bill was neither read, nor discussed, nor even voted ; at the close of a tumultuous sitting the Government simply declared that it had been passed by the House. I assisted at that scandalous meeting of the " *Narodnoie Sobranie* " which opened amid a strong effervescence. The opposition parties overtly accused the Government of selling the country. They emphasized their arguments and invectives by hurling books and inkstands at the heads of the Ministers. The most bellicose of them tried to fall upon their adversaries and proceed to blows, but were restrained by more peaceful friends. Radoslavoff held a revolver in his hand.

Amid all that uproar nobody even noticed that a secretary had climbed upon the platform to read the bill. When he came down the Chairman, a confirmed emissary of the Germans, pretended he was putting the bill to vote, the indescribable hubbub still going on. Then, of a sudden, the meeting was adjourned. When coming out, several persons inquired, in perfect innocence, when the bill was coming under discussion, and were astounded at hearing that the bill had just been " voted."

Disgusted with that comedy, especially so since it affected the interests of both Russia and Bulgaria, I went, early next morning, to see the President of the Council. I still hoped that the situation could be saved and intended to use the last remedy by appealing to the King's authority.

" I refuse to believe," I said to Radoslavoff, upon entering, " that His Majesty could consent, under such circumstances, to sanction an act of such purport to the country." Great was my surprise when Radoslavoff answered that the " resolution of the *Sobranje* " had been confirmed by the King on the previous night.

" Such meetings as yesterday's are a disgrace to your country," I said, unable to control my disgust, " the whole of Europe will talk of it with scorn."

" No one is going to say a word about it," cunningly

replied my interlocutor, "provided M. Savinsky does not mention it in his letter to Sazonoff."

"I shall mention it, even to-day," I answered, and walked out from the mercenary Minister.

When writing my report to Sazonoff, I naturally did not insist upon the details of the meeting; what I chiefly wanted to establish was that, if hitherto, I could still have some doubt as to the relations between Sofia on the one hand, and Berlin and Vienna on the other, I now had no doubt whatever that there existed between them a concrete arrangement.

At the very first occasion I also said so to the King.

The political consequences of the conclusion of the loan by Bulgaria seemed to me very important and disturbing indeed. Six days after the described meeting of the Sobranje, I wrote to Sazonoff, on July 8:

"Everything considered, I am convinced beyond any possibility of error, that while forcing the loan upon Bulgaria the Germans were pursuing aims of a highly political nature. The insistence displayed not only by the German banks but also by the German and Austrian Ministers in Sofia and their respective Governments while negotiating the loan; the formal and categorical opposition of the King and his Government to the examination of the French offers; the decision to accept at any cost the disastrous terms exacted by the German banks; the fear the Bulgarian Government had of these terms being discussed in the House, and, lastly, the shameless trickery applied to constitutional procedures in such a matter as a half-milliard loan coupled with long-termed and expensive concessions—all these facts represent, in my opinion, as many obvious and irrefutable proofs that the matter on hand was much less of a financial transaction than a political act of the highest purport. In my letter of May 16, I had already mentioned the German-Austrian plan of an economical and political conquest of the Near East. At present they are systematically carrying it out. The loan concluded on July 2 is nothing but another step in the same direction. . . . I possess evidence showing that Bulgaria has already received from Austria horses, guns,

rifles, and munitions. When I spoke of it to Radoslavoff, he did not even trouble to deny it; he said that since Bulgaria has to reinforce her army at any cost, she would accept aid from anyone who would care to proffer it.

"Still worried by the loss of Roumania to her cause, Austria is trying to detach Bulgaria from us and to draw her to the Triple Alliance. She realizes, however, that in the case of general complications, she would hardly succeed in getting Bulgaria to march against Russia. For that reason she probably has resorted to different tactics; being cynical, as usual, she may have touched Bulgaria's most vulnerable spot and promised her Macedonia in return for attacking Serbia in case of a European war. In this way Austria expects to improve her difficult situation and to escape the eventual necessity of fighting on two different fronts at once. . . . I have no doubt that after the loan is concluded it shall be followed up by an extensive and systematic activity in Bulgaria and that we shall have to reckon with that activity and fight it."

With the same mail, but in another letter, I also wrote :

" . . . The recent events show that the King is openly directing his policy towards Germany and Austria, thus clearly defining his attitude towards Russia, for which country he seemingly had not any good feelings. . . ."

Having prepared my mail on July 8, I personally took it to Constantinople in order to discuss the situation with Mr. de Giers, our Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, and also to relax a little from the nervous strain I had constantly been under for the last six months. Constantinople being separated from Sofia by but a seventeen hours' journey in express, I did not hesitate to undertake the trip, especially since my absence was going to last only a few days. As it will be seen presently, it had to be cut to forty-eight hours owing to the turn of events.

I arrived at the Serkidjeh station at Constantinople upon a beautiful morning on the day of the Turkish national fête. The Embassy launch was waiting to take me straight to Buyuk-Déré to the Ambassador's summer residence, where

the Embassy was at that time. My first visit to Constantinople having been in winter, I had never before seen the Bosphorus. Nothing more enchanting can be imagined than the panorama of the great Strait's shores, covered with splendid palaces intermingled with the most typical Oriental dwellings, all bathed in bright sunshine.

While sailing up the blue Bosphorus and watching first the vanishing of the picturesque maze of mosques and minarets of the ancient Byzantian city, then gradually appear the Dolma-Bagtcheh, the Beylerbey, the two castles of Roumeli and Anatoli-Hissar with their old towers, then at last, Therapia with its Embassies—sitting in my small boat I imagined myself to be the Prince in the *Sleeping Beauty*, sailing along the enchanted shores.

Buyuk-Déré, where our Embassy had its summer palace, is much more typical and beautiful as a site than Therapia, where the other Embassies reside in summer and which is supposed to be the most fashionable place and the centre of social life on the Bosphorus during the summer season. Near a large Turkish village—Buyuk-Déré—quite close to the water's edge and bathed by the Bosphorus, there stands a fine house in late Empire style so much used at the time of Alexander I in building the rich Russian country places. An enormous park, boasting of unique specimens of trees, surrounds and surmounts that princely residence where I was to spend two nights.

The Ambassador met me at the landing-place and asked me at lunch whether I should like to go the same night to a rout given by the Grand Vizier on the occasion of the National Fête. I was much interested to see a great political reception in such an original setting. Directly after lunch Mr. de Giers wrote a few words about me to the Grand Vizier; these places being hardly touched by European civilization, there was no telephone. Just before dinner, when we returned with the Ambassador from a caique excursion in the direction of the Black Sea, we found awaiting us the reply of the Grand Vizier, who said that he would be pleased to make my acquaintance.

About ten o'clock the Embassy launch came to fetch us. The view that faced us and everything that I saw that night seemed to come from the *Thousand and One Nights*. Both shores of the Bosphorus were illuminated with the thousands of lights reflected in the dark waters of the Strait ; hundreds of boats of every description—electric and motor launches, caiques, ordinary fishing boats rowed by Turks in the picturesque local costume dresses—were covering the water, all of them racing towards the brightly lit gilded Konak of Prince Saïd-Halim at Yeni-Kew. Its gardens descended to the water's-edge, thus letting the boats arrive alongside of a large terrace leading up to the main entrance. The Grand Vizier stood in the door, surrounded by officials, and greeted his guests with Oriental affability, very unctious but still dignified.

He was an elderly man whose personal qualities would never have brought him to fill the important post to which he had been raised by the powerful trio—Talaat, Enver, and Djemal—but it was his very lack of personality that had won for him the highest post in the Empire. He blindly signed and approved without reading whatever was presented to him by Talaat, Enver, or Djemal, who never took the trouble to explain him anything. Howsoever pleasant the functions of a Grand Vizier may be under such circumstances, Saïd-Halim's ambition would have preferred those of the Khedive of Egypt. Senior of Mehemet-Ali's descendants and an obedient servant of the "Triumvirate," he hoped that some day or another his wishes would be fulfilled and that he would be raised to the throne of the Pharaohs. By appointing as Grand Vizier a weak and undetermined man like Halim, the three friends of the Germans had made sure they would find in him no opposition to their pro-German policy, more and more tending to make Turkey bend before German demands. Being unscrupulous men themselves, and pursuing no aim but their own personal interests, these leaders of the Ottoman Empire were easily tempted by what Beaumarchais' Don Basilio called "irresistible arguments" coming to them from Berlin. Thus

they allowed their country to be invaded by a German phalanx headed by the ill-remembered Liman von Sanders.

The insidious manner in which Emperor William extorted from the Czar his consentment to the appointment of the Liman von Sanders Mission to Constantinople is still well remembered. In 1913 the Russian Emperor had come to Berlin accompanied by his two eldest daughters for the wedding of Princess Louise Victoria, Emperor William's daughter, with the Duke of Brunswick. Always true to his method of taking people unawares, the German Emperor seized the opportunity of talking with the Czar in the absence of the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs. During one of their conversations *en famille*, he asked unexpectedly : " You would have nothing against my sending one of my Generals on special mission to the Sultan ? " Unsuspicious of the trap, the Emperor consented. When he returned to St. Petersburg and mentioned that conversation to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, there arose great excitement at the Ministry as well as at the Constantinople Embassy. Mr. de Giers was instructed to undo the arrangement by advising the Porte to be on their guard ; but all he could obtain was that instead of receiving the title of General Commanding the First Army Corps, Liman von Sanders was appointed General Inspector of the Turkish Army, with the rank of Field-Marshal, which changed absolutely nothing as to the bottom of the question.

In defiance of all Russia's secular traditions, a German Mission had thus been established on the Bosphorus, bringing with it a whole staff of officers, specialists, and technicians of every description. The arrogance with which Liman himself and his subordinates treated the Turks gave rise to more than one incident. General Sanders wanted to undo in that respect the Ambassador Wangenheim.

It was the same Government of Enver and Talaat who, pressed by the Germans at the beginning of the war, had allowed the *Goeben* to enter the Bosphorus, permitted her to hoist the Turkish flag, and to keep her German crew ; it was they, again, who allowed her to bombard Russian

commercial ports in the Black Sea in order to deliberately provoke a war between Russia and Turkey. When, after that treacherous act, our Ambassador was instructed to speak severely and categorically to the Grand Vizier, he found poor Halim trembling and assuring him, with tears in his eyes, of his friendly feelings towards Russia. In spite of such Oriental methods, it seems that Halim, as well as the majority of his compatriots, did not want a rupture with Russia; but he was too feeble-minded to oppose the omnipotent triumvirate supported by German money.

He was just as weak in private life as he was in politics; and on the background of the rout he was giving on July 10, the three powerful Ministers stood out much more in evidence than himself.

Above all, Enver Pacha looked as though he held all the destinies in his hands; it was to be seen if only in the typical officiousness that is generally displayed in the East around power and those who represent it. That small man, painted, tightly corseted but full of will-power and energy, seemed to dominate the crowd. All the time he was surrounded by people anxious to win his favour; Enver's patronage was chiefly coveted on account of his marriage bonds with the Sultan's family. At a given moment I was talking to the Bulgarian Minister, Mr. Tontcheff, whom I had reasons to suspect of German sympathies; he was trying to assure me the contrary. Presently one of the aides-de-camp of Enver came to tell him that the Minister of War wished to talk to him. It was worth seeing the indecent hurry with which Tontcheff abandoned me and ran towards Enver.

Out of the three, Talaat Pacha was the only real Osmanli, a Turk by birth. Formerly but a small post-office clerk at Uskub in Macedonia, Talaat had been lucky enough to rise to his present high post, thanks both to his intelligence and to German support.

As Minister of the Interior, he had taken part at the Turkish Delegation that had gone in early summer to greet Emperor Nicholas at Livadia, and he had just returned from

that trip. When I made his acquaintance, he talked lengthily of his stay in the Crimea and of the kindly way in which the Emperor had received the Delegation ; he also said how pleased he was of the confidence that reigned between our two Governments. While telling me this, he knew very well that in case of a conflict all his sympathies would go to the German side. In the East, more than anywhere else, the power of speech has been given to man to allow him to disguise the truth.

The Minister of the Navy, Djemal Pacha, produced a better impression ; he had just come back from France, where he had been following naval manœuvres on board the ironclad *Courbet* with Admiral Boué de Lapeyrère.

At the side of the *triumvirs* Djavid Pacha, the Minister of Finance, paraded ostentatiously the features of his race ; he was won, soul and body, to the German cause and hardly concealed it at all.

The Khedive of Egypt was also present at the Grand Vizier's rout, as well as the entire Diplomatic Corps, among whom I met many old friends and acquaintances. Among the latter were the French Ambassador and Mme Bompard, whom I had known in St. Petersburg. They asked me to tea at Therapia for the next day.

When I arrived there, I found Mme Bompard alone in the Embassy garden. A few minutes later the Ambassador arrived and asked me whether I had seen the ultimatum. "What ultimatum ?" "Why, you have not seen it ?" He rang the bell and ordered the latest telegraphic bulletin to be brought. It contained the famous Austrian ultimatum to Serbia.

As Mme Bompard had not read it either, she asked me to read it aloud. The farther I read, the more I was stupefied and indignant. "Go on, go on," the Ambassador kept saying at each of my exclamations, "it is not the end yet."

One thing of two was perfectly evident ; it was either Germany, who, acting through Austria, wanted to inflict, over the head of Serbia, a new humiliation upon Russia, and take this time a decisive step in the Balkans ; or else

she was trying to precipitate a war, that war she had been so carefully, so lovingly, and so perfidiously preparing for over forty years.

"But this means war!" I cried, when I had finished reading. "It looks like it," answered Mr. Bompard; "in any case, the situation has suddenly become very strained and serious."

I hastily took leave of my amiable hosts and went home to consult Mr. de Giers. When I told him that under the circumstances I thought the only thing for me to do was to go back to my post as quick as possible, he answered: "Dear friend, in spite of all rules of hospitality, I cannot retain you: go back!" I hurried to the telephone to order my tickets. It was nearly seven o'clock. The express would not be leaving until the next afternoon, so that I had the evening to myself and I spent it talking with the Ambassador. The next morning we made a charming excursion to the Princes' Islands.

At six o'clock the train was bearing me towards Sofia, running along the Marmara sea-coast round the Eddy-Kouleh, the Castle of the Seven Dungeons. The setting sun was throwing upon the sea a quite peculiar light, and of a sudden I understood where the name of that sea had come from: the immense sheet of water had indeed all the reflexes of polished marble. Leaning out of the car-window, I watched with great sadness the city of enchantment vanishing in the distance. I felt deeply depressed, being certain that something terrible and irreparable was about to happen. Half an hour later the sea, the Princes' Islands, even the suburbs of the city were no longer to be seen. The train was painfully climbing the waste lands of Tchataldja; and that arid country, devoid of all charm and still bearing the traces of the 1912 war, seemed to be the symbol of the life of struggle, sacrifice, and privation the world was then on the eve of entering.

Heavy-hearted, but courageous and ready for the fray, I arrived at Sofia. The Legation staff, the ladies as well as the men, had, in a friendly way, come to meet me at the

station, all of them anxious and upset. Dark as they were, our forebodings were, however, surpassed by the indescribable horrors the future was keeping in store for us !

Since that time we have obtained overwhelming proof, documentary and therefore irrefutable,¹ that the worst conjectures as to the Kaiser's intentions were perfectly justified : both he and his entourage wanted a war at all costs in order to do away, once and for all time, with the very idea of Russia extending her protection to the Balkanic Slavs and hampering Germany's expansion in the Slavic countries. They might have consented, that is true, not to recur immediately to the force of arms, but that only upon the condition of bringing to Russia such humiliations as would ruin for ever her old prestige among the Balkanic Slavs ; a thing that Russia of that time, mighty, magnificent, splendid, and sought after by every country, could never have tolerated.

After these *authentic* documents, annotated by the Kaiser, were published by the man who for some time conducted Germany's foreign affairs, had access to the most secret archives, and who wanted to prove the fatal rôle of the Kaiser in the events—*there can be no longer any question of responsibility* ; there only remains one sole responsibility, that of Emperor William. His subordinates, both military and civilian, did nothing but carry out his instructions ; they assisted him in the realization of the diabolical plan he had conceived. And this was the beginning of a struggle for life and death.

It would be a long work to extract from that official German volume all the crushing evidence it contains against the Kaiser's policy ; neither would it be within the scope of the present narration. Still I cannot help quoting a few excerpts that have a direct bearing upon the events I am describing.

“ From the beginning of 1914 on, Germany and Austria

¹ Cf. the Collection of secret documents of the German Chancery, with annotations of Emperor William ; published by K. Kautsky, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs during the revolution of Nov. 9, 1918.

display a great activity in the sphere of Balkanic affairs. Discontented with the Treaty of Bucharest, Austria shows her resolution to have it revised with the aid of Germany, in spite of the fact that the latter is rather satisfied with it. In March, the Central Empires have already created the new kingdom of Albania and have put upon its throne one of theirs, the Prince of Wied.

"Emperor William's interviews with Archduke Franz-Ferdinand become more frequent: in April they meet at Miramar, then again, on June 12, at Konopicht; after that interview in Bohemia, at which Admiral von Tirpitz also assisted, the Vienna Government prepares a memorandum proving that in view of the Balkanic situation it is necessary to oppose energetically, and at an opportune moment, the development Russia is aspiring to and methodically accomplishing, and which it would perhaps prove impossible to destroy at a later period."

I do not belong to those who see Emperor William's hand in the murder of Archduke Franz-Ferdinand, who, allegedly, could not be persuaded to proceed at the pace his Imperial friend found necessary. It is evident, however, that the Archduke's assassination precipitated the events.

But to continue quoting from Kautsky's volume:

"After the Serajevo catastrophe (June 28), Count Hoyos, Chief of Cabinet of the Austro-Hungarian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, arrived in Berlin on July 5, carrying an autograph letter from Emperor Franz-Joseph to Emperor William. 'In future,' wrote the old Emperor, 'the efforts of my Government must tend to the isolation and reduction of Serbia.'"¹

Many versions have been circulated concerning the assembly held at Potsdam following upon the receipt of that letter; there has been much talk about a Crown Council at which a war against Serbia, or even the World War, have been decided upon. Let us put aside such rumours and limit ourselves to an official German document—"The White Book"—published in June, 1919.

¹ Cf. "Die Deutschen Dokumenten." No. 13.

We find there the following passage regarding the Potsdam Council :

" No special decisions were taken, for it had been established beforehand that it was impossible to deny to Austria-Hungary, in her desire to obtain real guarantees from Serbia, the support conforming with the obligations dictated by the alliance (p. 50)."

It is evident that Germany declared herself *in advance* willing to support her ally in whatever the latter should find necessary to undertake.

The same encouraging attitude of Germany towards Austria is further confirmed in a despatch of the Austrian Ambassador in Berlin, dated July 5, in which Count Szögyeny quotes Emperor William's own words : ". . . Russia's attitude would certainly be hostile, but he (Emperor William) has been prepared for it for years and we may rest assured that even if a war broke out between Austria-Hungary and Russia, Germany, with her customary fidelity to the alliance, *would be on our side*. On the other hand, Russia, according to her actual situation was not yet ready for war and would undoubtedly hesitate before going into action. If we really recognize the necessity of an action against Serbia, Emperor William *would regret* to see us let go *unused the present opportunity which is so favourable to us*."¹

The support that Germany intended to guarantee unconditionally to Austria-Hungary was very precious indeed to the Vienna Cabinet ; it is to be seen, among others, from a telegram, absolutely secret, in which Mr. Tschirschky, the German Ambassador in Vienna, reports his conversation with Count Tissa.² That telegram contains the following passage : " Count Tissa added that the attitude of Germany who declares she shall stand by the side of the Monarchy had had the greatest influence upon the firm attitude taken by Emperor Franz-Joseph."

When things had made necessary an ultimatum to Serbia, it was not the German statesmen alone, but also Emperor

¹ Cf. the Austrian "Red Book," 1919, p. 22.

² Cf. "Die Deutschen Dokumenten." No. 40.

William himself who took a most active part in its redaction. Upon the margin of the above-mentioned telegram, facing the phrase : " As to the moment when the note should be presented to Serbia, it was considered better to wait for Poincaré's departure from St. Petersburg," the Emperor wrote in his own hand : " What a pity ! " The telegram proceeded as follows : " The note would be so worded as to make its acceptance so to say impossible¹ ; " the word " impossible " was underlined twice by Emperor William.

There is also the following passage in another telegram of Tschirschky, also dated July 14 : " It has been decided to wait for Poincaré's departure from Russia in order to avoid as far as possible a fraternization at St. Petersburg, which might be prompted by the action of champagne and the influence of Poincaré, Isvolsky, and the Grand Dukes, and which could then affect or even stabilize the attitude of the two Powers. It would be better to present the note after the toasts had been pronounced." The Emperor once more noted upon the margin : " Pity ! " ²

Further quotations would be useless ; the above are amply sufficient to discredit once for all, and documentarily, such fallacious assertions as that the Berlin Cabinet was ignorant of the contents of the famous note. Not only did they know them, but they collaborated in its draught and contributed mightily in giving it a form unacceptable for Serbia. Berlin even went as far as to calculate with the Austrians not only the day, but the very hour, when the ultimatum should be delivered to the Serbians, in order to make its " success " as effective as possible. As a matter of fact, after Emperor William had agreed, rather reluctantly as we have seen, to have the note delivered after President Poincaré's departure from St. Petersburg, the two conspirators sat down together to study carefully and in detail the movements of the Head of the French Republic. The delivery of the note had been fixed for July 23 at five in the afternoon. At ten o'clock of the same day Mr. Poincaré was going to leave St. Petersburg. It was calculated in Berlin

¹ Cf. " Die Deutschen Dokumenten." No. 40.

² *Ibid.* No. 49.

and in Vienna that under the circumstances, if the step were taken in Belgrade at the appointed hour, the news would reach St. Petersburg before the President had left. Therefore, "Baron Giesl was instructed to postpone for one hour the delivery of the note" as Tschirschky telegraphed to Berlin on July 23.¹

Obviously everything was done concertedly and in the most perfect agreement. The two allies were worthy of each other! Nevertheless, their conjectures as to the President's voyage failed completely. Instead of continuing it, as soon as Mr. Poincaré heard of the ultimatum, he cancelled his visits to the Scandinavian Courts and hastened back to France, reaching home on July 29.

Humble and conciliatory as it were, Serbia's reply to the ultimatum was still rejected by Austria in the well-known conditions. The forty-eight hours' term given to the Serbian Government, the hurry in which Baron Giesl announced the rupture and left Belgrade with all his staff scarcely half an hour after receiving the reply and having hardly had the time to read it—all that goes to prove how anxious the conspirators were to lose no time and let their plan develop exactly as they had arranged it.

Let us recapitulate that plan :

1. It had been resolved to deliver the ultimatum to Serbia at the moment when Mr. Poincaré, then the guest of the Emperor of Russia, should have left St. Petersburg and, being out at sea, would be unable to confer with the Imperial Government.
2. The short delay of forty-eight hours allowed for the reply was calculated to prevent Serbia from getting in touch with Russia and the other Powers.
3. That delay was cut still shorter by the fact that the text of the ultimatum was communicated to the Powers but the next day after it had been handed to Serbia.
4. Mr. Pashitch, the Serbian President of the Council, would be absent from Belgrade, being engaged in his election trip in the country.

¹ "Die Deutschen Dokumenten." No. 127.

5. The labour troubles fomented by German agents in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kharkov, and Kiev were expected, according to Count Pourtalès, to create difficulties for the Russian Government.
6. According to Prince Lichnowsky in London, the Irish question should prevent Great Britain from taking an active part in the events, and lastly
7. In case of a conflagration it could be expected that Belgium would offer no resistance, that even France (ç) would remain neutral,¹ whereas Italy and Roumania would side up with the Central Powers.

It has been seen how all these intrigues and learned combinations failed, one after the other : President Poincaré returned rapidly to Paris, Pashitch went back to Belgrade ; France and Russia entered at once into the closest contact ; the previsions of the two German Ambassadors failed to be confirmed, and neither the labour disorders in Russia, nor the Irish complications could prevent the respective Governments from standing up in defence of right and justice. As to the attitude of Italy and Roumania, they are well known.

When, much earlier than the appointed hour, the text of the Serbian reply to the Austrian ultimatum had been established, Mr. Pashitch went to see our chargé d'affaires in Belgrade, Mr. Strandtmann, and told him with eyes full of tears : " We have prepared such a humble and conciliatory reply that even you, who have preached us moderation all the time, shall be surprised and pleased ! We have done it with bleeding hearts, but we realize that we could not act differently."

Indeed, the only point against which Serbia believed she could and should protest in the name of her sovereignty was the one that forced upon her the admittance of Austrian officials to investigate in Serbian territory the murder of the Archduke.

¹ Cf. the telegram of Bethmann-Hollweg to Schoen, Ambassador in Paris, dated August 1 : " If, what is unlikely, the French Government wanted to remain neutral, Your Excellency will kindly inform them that we shall be obliged to demand, as a token of French neutrality, the fortresses of Toul and Verdun ; we should occupy them, and restitute them after the end of the war against Russia. A reply to this question must reach us to-morrow, August 2, at 4 p.m." ("Die Deutschen Dokumenten." No. 149.).



In spite of its submissive tone, the Serbian reply was rejected and the Austrian Minister left Belgrade. Twenty-four hours later the Serbian capital was bombarded.

On July 19 (old style) (August 1) Germany declared war against Russia.

The stirring events that took place during the last two days, full of anxiety, that preceded the declaration of war are too generally known for me to describe them here; especially so since in Sofia they were less known than elsewhere. I shall therefore take up the thread of political events as they developed in Bulgaria. On July 15, after a long conversation with Radoslavoff, I wired to Sazonoff (No. 146) :

"Although I have no positive proof of the existence of an arrangement between Austria and Bulgaria, as to the cession of Macedonia to the latter in return for her support, still everything leads to think that an arrangement of that sort most probably exists. The neutrality referred to by Radoslavoff is, in my opinion, merely expectant in nature. The Bulgarians' practical mind leads them to try and gain time in order to obtain a clearer view of the situation; later on and, according to the turn of events, they will decide with whom it should be to their best advantage to side up."

Next day I stated (No. 151): "It is clear that the Bulgarians, encouraged in that by the Austrians, would not neglect an opportunity of surreptitiously laying hold of Macedonia."

On July 21 (August 3), that is two days after the declaration of war, I received from Sazonoff the following instructions (No. 1655) :

"If Bulgaria, remembering the best precepts of her history, categorically declares herself prepared to negotiate with us a co-ordination of her attitude with ours, she has a chance to dispel all misunderstandings, to re-establish and to strengthen the ties between her and Russia, and to come out of the ordeal nearer to the realization of her national ideals."

Such an instruction was certainly welcome, as well as the promptitude displayed by the Imperial Government, at such a difficult moment, turning to Bulgaria and offering her a chance to remedy the burdensome consequences of the Bucharest Treaty. That attitude of my Government provided me later with a powerful weapon when I had to refute the calumnies of our enemies, when they insinuated to the Bulgarians that Russia had forgotten them and sacrificed their interests to those of the Serbians.

Sazonoff authorized me to use his instructions not only with the Bulgarian Government, but with the King as well, provided I considered it as timely and necessary. I availed myself of the opportunity and requested an audience.

On July 23 (August 5) King Ferdinand received me at his palace in Sofia. I reported that audience to Sazonoff in a long letter from which I will quote here the following passages :

" After reading to the King, first in Russian, then in French, the original text of Your Excellency's instruction, I spent over an hour developing to him its general outline. *I endeavoured to prove to the King to what extent his policy was detrimental to Bulgaria.* I spoke of the famous letter his present Ministers had addressed him on June 26, 1913, advising him to break away from Russia and to turn to Austria's side. The men who signed that criminal document were called to power by Your Majesty and retain it until now. Your Majesty can realize the impression it produces in Russia. I then spoke of the loan Bulgaria had recently contracted in Germany; I pointed out the far greater readiness with which the Bulgarian Government had listened to the German offers than to those of Russia and France. I stated that, since the beginning of the negotiations for the loan, I felt sure the Germans would win; that the conditions in which the question had been submitted to the House and 'voted' clearly proved to me that it was not an ordinary financial arrangement, but a political combination, and that his Government had been bound beforehand by certain obligations they had no longer a right to ignore."

I went on: " While Russia was not engaged in a war, such a policy was criminal, particularly in regard to Bulgaria ;

but now it is so in regard to Russia. We are going to consider this attitude of Bulgaria as openly hostile and susceptible of creating for ever a chasm between the two countries. Let us lay aside the questions of sentiment and gratefulness ; but from the point of view of Bulgaria's most practical interests, I cannot understand how she can expect anything from Austria, who, owing to her traditional perfidiousness and selfishness towards her allies and her ' friends,' had just been so cruelly abandoned by Italy and Roumania. These two have understood, at last, that it is not Austria who would aid them to satisfy their vital interests. Their ' defection ' aroused indignation at Berlin and Vienna ; but it has been perfectly well merited and is going to help us in our strife with the disturbers of European peace and the enemies of Slavism. If our effort is crowned with success, Russia's first care will be to establish a solid and durable state of things in the Balkans, none of that ephemeral balance always preached by that perfidious Austria with the only view of fishing more easily in turbid water. If at that moment Russia has nothing to reproach to Bulgaria, the latter shall get every advantage.

" Of course you could reply that luck is capricious, and that in spite of the appearances, which seem to be favourable to us, it is not certain yet which way the wheel of fortune is going to turn. Very well ! I am even willing to admit for one moment something I hold to be utterly impossible, that is Austria's victory ; what would she do in that case ? Her first care would be to hamper the very existence of Serbia ; her next step would be to reduce Bulgaria, thenceforth of no use to her, to the state of an insignificant vassal no longer capable of opposing Austria's so-much-coveted expansion toward Salonika and the Ægean Sea."

" Ah, yes, Salonika ! " murmured the King with closed eyes and a shrug.

" I finished by pointing out once more that in the future, just as in the past, everything profitable to Bulgaria could only come to her from Russia who demanded nothing in return but a solidarity of interests, or at least a faithful neutrality as well as her abstention from fomenting trouble in Macedonia and from harming Serbia.

" At parting the King asked me to leave with him a

memorandum with a summary of my instructions, in order to discuss them with Radoslavoff; he also promised to give me a prompt reply.

"The same day I saw Radoslavoff and also—with the King's consent—Ghennadieff; the latter did not then belong to the Government but acted as a non-official counsellor to it in questions of foreign policy."

Enlarging upon what I had told the King, I said to Radoslavoff:

"The mere fact that at the first news of the declaration of war Bulgaria has not rushed like one man to the assistance of her deliverer is monstrous in itself; Russia can well manage without you. But if you take a hand in a combination hostile to Russia, Bulgaria shall risk her very existence."

The delay of the Bulgarian Government in replying to my overture seemed interminable, and on July 25 (August 7) I telegraphed to Sazonoff (No. 168):

"In spite of the promise given by the King and his Government to study our proposals carefully and without delay, I still have no reply; my explanation would be that either some negotiations are being conducted between Sofia and Vienna, or else that there already exists an arrangement between the two Governments. I am informed that Austria and Germany are doing everything in their power in order to oppose to us a combination including Turkey and Roumania and that they would like to force Bulgaria into it too. . . . I am afraid that we are facing an accomplished fact."

As we have seen, Sazonoff's first idea had been to arrive at an understanding with Bulgaria; he realized at that time that in order to win her over to us it was necessary to offer her some territorial compensations, Macedonia being the most coveted one of all. This is why his original plan was to use with the Serbians a stern language admitting of no resistance on their part. Indeed, how could one imagine the Serbians refusing to make the small territorial concessions useful to the common cause, as well as to Russia; to the Russia who was even then engaged in a war because of them, who supported them in every way and who was dreaming of making of them a Great Serbia including

Bosnia, Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, and having a wide access to the sea ?

It was but later, and owing to circumstances I am going to explain further, that Sazonoff changed his tactics and the manly tone of his first instructions became slack and undecided.

On July 23 (August 5), the day of my audience with the King, Sazonoff wired to Belgrade (No. 1684) "that it was most urgently needed to put aside petty reckonings and to act deliberately and quickly." The tone of that telegram clearly shows that Sazonoff had no doubt about the Serbians. He instructed Strandtmann, our chargé d'affaires in Belgrade, to use energetic and authoritative language, the only possible one under the circumstances. Unfortunately that firmness dwindled later on to vacillation, partly due to the displeasure King Ferdinand's Government finished by arousing in Russia by its more than equivocal behaviour. The fact did not pass unnoticed by the Serbians, who soon made bold to disregard our suggestions, even to reject them, and used in their negotiations with the Entente an arrogant language incompatible with our interests.

In his telegram of July 23 (August 5), Sazonoff had quite definitely pronounced himself in favour of the immediate cession to Bulgaria, in return for her assistance, of the eastern part of Macedonia up to the Vardar and, in case of our victory, of the entire Macedonian territory which had been guaranteed to Bulgaria in accordance with the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty of February 29, 1912. In my opinion it is merely owing to lack of energy and perseverance in the carrying out of this plan that all that happened later must be ascribed. When replying to Strandtmann's offer, Pashitch exclaimed: "What, the frontier of 1912?—For nothing in the world!" and when that reply went unchallenged by us, I was at once overwhelmed with doubts as to the future. I therefore telegraphed to Sazonoff on July 25 (August 7), (No. 168) :

"If you fail in persuading Serbia to accept your plan as exposed in telegram No. 1684, the only thing that shall remain for us to do will be to demand from King Ferdinand

and his Government the strictest observance of a friendly neutrality towards us."

On July 26 (August 8) the Bulgarian Government delivered to me a written reply to my offer of July 23 (August 5). They stated that the country, already exhausted by two consecutive wars, could not begin a third one; they also spoke in rather vague terms of their desire to stay neutral.

Sazonoff referred to that reply as "insincere" (No. 1768) and instructed me on July 28 (August 10), (No. 1771), to demand "a prompt and clear reply to our suggestion of a neutrality coupled with the pledge of hampering the actions of Turkey; in the carrying out of the latter task, Bulgaria could count upon the support of our Black Sea fleet."

Since the outbreak of the war I held it perfectly clear and told Sazonoff on August 3 (26), (No. 215), that "all the sympathies of King Ferdinand and his Government went in the direction of Vienna; that the Government were taking a series of measures favourable to Austria and hostile to us, and that there had even been cases of obvious breach of the promised neutrality." Having grouped and arranged in order all the data I disposed of regarding that matter, I had, on the 12th (August 25), a very serious talk with Radoslavoff. On the 15th (August 28) I reported to Sazonoff (No. 220):

"It becomes ever clearer that the King and his Government intend to follow the path that led them last year to June 16 and to the Peace of Bucharest."

The same day, when reporting that German sailors had passed through Sofia on their way to Constantinople, I telegraphed (No. 219):

"To that overt breach of neutrality there may be added a number of others, ones of lesser importance; taken together, they prove that something is maturing here. It would be hard to define exactly what it is, but anything may be expected from the palace and its obedient servants. In order to have it their own way and to obtain full freedom

of action, but with no apparent reason, the Government has just declared the state of siege ; there is also question of an eventual mobilization. Agitators are active in Macedonia. Various vexatious measures are being taken against Serbia ; it looks as if the Minister of Austria had a hand in it. Summing up the above, I believe that it becomes ever more pressing to carry out as quickly as possible your plan of action. However, seeing the present state of excitement, it would not suffice to make to the Government the offers you have in view, purely and simply ; it would be urgently necessary to make them subject to the answer the King and his Government would make to a definite question : is Bulgaria with us, or against us ? We also ought to make it clear to them that the seriousness of the moment does not permit us to be satisfied by dilatory or equivocal answers. Under ordinary circumstances negotiations of that sort ought to remain secret, but at present, to the contrary, it would appear useful to make them known to the public opinion. A reconstruction, even a partial one, of the present Cabinet might be accepted as a proof of the good intentions of the Royal Government. On the other hand, should mobilization orders be issued, as may happen at any moment without previous notice, we should certainly take it as a hostile action. In such a case it would be better not to be caught unawares ; this is why I venture to request anticipatory instructions as to what we shall do in the occurrence ? ”

The German machinations in Constantinople were leading to an ever-growing fear that Turkey would enter into action. That possibility worried me, and on August 23 (September 5) I suggested to Sazonoff the following plan of action (No. 233) :

“ I beg for instructions concerning the case of Turkey entering into the war, if by that time we have not succeeded in inducing the Sofia Cabinet to alter its policy. Would it not be advisable for me, in such a case, to lay before the Bulgarian Government, simultaneously with my British and French colleagues, the following demands, allowing a fixed term for the reply :

“ (a) To sweep from mines the ports of Varna and Burgas.

- " (b) Not only not to oppose, but even to assist the landing and the transportation of our troops on Bulgarian territory, provided that the military operations make it necessary.
- " (c) To allow to our allies the free use of the port of Dede-Agatch.
- " (d) To oppose an armed resistance to the Turks, should they enter upon Bulgarian territory and independently from their intentions.

" The absence of a perfectly definite reply—yes or no—should be taken by Russia and the allies as a proof that Bulgaria is joining the enemy's camp and as a signal for us to depart from Sofia."

The arguments I used with Radoslavoff during my frequent conversations with him seemed to produce a certain impression upon the Prime Minister who, inwardly, was not quite sure that the card he was made to play was the right one. The pro-Russian-Bulgarian politicians noticed the influence I was getting over him and stated more than once that from the way he behaved towards them they could tell whether I had seen him lately or not. They entreated me therefore not to neglect him and to talk to him as often as possible. I yielded willingly and went to see Radoslavoff constantly, much more often than my colleagues, who only visited him when they had precise instructions to carry out. It is but fair to state that I had one advantage over them; Radoslavoff was deficient in foreign languages, but with me he could speak Bulgarian.

On August 20 (September 2) I had with him a long conversation, which I reported to Sazonoff by wire (No. 241). Among other things I told to Radoslavoff: " Turkey may be compelled by Germany to declare war to us; Bulgaria shall then have to decide upon her own attitude. An attempt to drag the Bulgarian people into a war against Russia would amount to madness; still everything I observe around me causes me to have the gravest apprehensions and leads me to doubt the Bulgarian Government's sincerity."

During this same conversation I also alluded, quite academically and privately, to the possibility of a Russian landing in Bulgaria in the case of war with Turkey. "What would your attitude be then?" I asked. The conversation was taking place after a certain success we had won over the Austrians.

Radoslavoff replied: "Of course, in such a case, Bulgaria would be bound to protest against the violation of her neutrality. But she would do so merely formally, without proceeding to any aggressive action against Russia."

Feeling sure that it would be most important to Sazonoff to know what Bulgaria would be likely to do in a case which seemed then more than possible, I reported to him Radoslavoff's answer (No. 273).

Meanwhile, I was recording with anxiety the accumulating symptoms of the King's and his Government's adventurous plans. In a secret letter dated September 14 (27) I drew my chief's attention to the following facts: "The arrival in Sofia of General Savoff, the former Commander-in-Chief of the Bulgarian Army during the war of 1912; a systematic propaganda against Serbia conducted by the governmental press; the discredit thrown upon everything Russian by the semi-official press; Ghennadieff's trip to Constantinople; military preparations on the Greek frontier, while the Turkish border remained quite open; the transit across Bulgaria of German military units and munition trains bound for Constantinople, and, lastly, the constant and intimate intercourse of German and Turkish officers with Bulgarian general staff officers."

I did not conceal, either, from the Minister "how tempting ought to be for the Bulgarians the perspective of obtaining Macedonia without firing a single shot, as the Germans advised them to do, while we had not really promised them anything tangible. With their practical minds, they expected us to make them definite and concrete proposals; instead of such, I had been instructed on July 23 last to offer them merely 'the possibility of coming nearer to the realization of their national ideals,' while proposing them, it is true, to

begin negotiations in order to co-ordinate their attitude with our own. In the beginning of August Your Excellency had in view a joint action of the allies at Nish and at Sofia and you recognized the necessity of promising to Bulgaria 'advantages of a real kind.' You even specified in your telegram (No. 2105) that you understood the term as 'a promise made to Bulgaria and guaranteed by the other Entente Powers to compensate her by the cession of the so-called "incontestable" part of Macedonia.' On August 13 (26) you went still further and telegraphed that should the Bulgarian Government insist upon obtaining some immediate palpable guarantees, it were Ishtib and Radovishta that could be offered them at once. Later, at the suggestion of the British Government, every allusion to territorial concessions in favour of Bulgaria was excluded from the negotiations of the Entente and the project of making direct representations to the King was shelved. It thus happens that the Bulgarian Government has not yet heard anything, either from us or from our allies regarding the concrete benefits Bulgaria could gain by following our advices. Meanwhile, the Austrians, on the contrary, do nothing but overflow with lavish promises both the Bulgarian Government and the influential Macedonians. They not only guarantee to Bulgaria the whole of Macedonia, but Pirot and Nish as well. Only the other day, General Savoff, President of the Macedonian Central Committee, spoke in that sense while addressing the local committee and succeeded in persuading the corps of officers who pronounced themselves in favour of a military occupation of Macedonia, though realizing that it would mean war against Russia's ally.

"On the other hand, Ghennadieff, just back from Constantinople, speaks of the complete success of his mission and affirms that Turkey's support is certain. Of course I have not been able to ascertain exactly whether he really had an official mission to the Porte, nor of what kind, but, all the same, things look very much as if some day, perhaps not as remote as we think, we might find ourselves facing

accomplished facts: Turkish troops, allegedly directed against the Greeks, will have crossed the Bulgarian boundary line; Bulgarian bands will have entered Macedonia and Bulgaria will have mobilized. In my letter of the 2nd (August 15) I have already raised the question what we would do under such circumstances and whether it would not be advisable to think it over in advance, keeping in store, as a last measure, the possibility of approaching directly King Ferdinand? In your telegram (No. 2398) dated August 22, you suggested that we might 'guarantee him his crown' provided he followed our advices. But in the opposite case we should be compelled to separate him from the Bulgarian nation, and we would see history repeat itself: one hundred years ago, Alexander I had to wage war against Napoleon, but not against the French; in the same way, we should be compelled to declare war against King Ferdinand, but not against the Bulgarian nation. Our sacred duty is to prevent such a horrible possibility and we should not neglect any means that could help us to avoid it."

It has been shown that at the beginning of the war Sazonoff did not admit of the possibility of Serbia, whom we had saved from total destruction, being intransigent enough to create difficulties for us. All his first instructions issued to our representatives abroad (Nos. 2105, 2224, 2282) go to prove that such was his opinion. His later change of attitude might find its explanation in the personal unpopularity in Russia of King Ferdinand and his pro-Austrian Government and also in the hesitancy of some of the allies. Russian public opinion was certainly not to be blamed for feeling outraged when Bulgaria, as represented by her King, began to bargain her sympathies to Russia at the outset of the great European conflict. After they had freed Bulgaria from the Turkish yoke at the cost of their blood and very heavy sacrifices, the Russians had got into the habit of regarding the Bulgarians as their brothers and of expecting that at the right moment Bulgaria would come forward, eager to repay her debt of gratitude; hence the painful impression produced by Bulgaria's attitude in 1914.

It is but fair to state that such conduct was dictated to

the country by its governors ; as far as the people were concerned I can certify that, in spite of all the mistakes made by the Russian Government during about forty years, the nation had preserved intact its feeling of gratitude to her deliverers. Indeed, as soon as the war had broken out, I began receiving pile upon pile of letters, one more touching than the other, coming from the most obscure and remote parts of the country, wishing success to the Slavic cause and containing donations to be forwarded to the sons of the heroes of the emancipation war of 1877-78. Such letters came to form entire archives and some of them could not be read without genuine emotion. If one thinks of the difficulty in collecting money in Bulgaria, one must realize the moral significance attached to these donations which had been gathered pennywise after Mass and prayers said for the success of our army.

At this point I should like to interrupt for a moment the narrative of the events of 1914 and 1915, and to throw a retrospective glance, as short as possible, upon the Russian policy in Bulgaria, beginning from the moment when the Imperial Government had yielded in 1877 to a well-defined public opinion and decided to come to the rescue of Russia's younger brothers. That war cost Russia very heavy losses ; over two hundred thousand Russians fell on the plains of Plevna and in the hills of Shipka, for these days an enormous number. The object of the war was attained ; Bulgaria had obtained her freedom under the suzerainty of the Sultan. The Bulgarians dreamt only of Russia and insistently claimed for their Sovereign a Russian Grand Duke. But the St. Petersburg Cabinet opposed the candidature of any member of the Imperial Family, on the ground that such an alliance would thenceforth bind too tightly Russia with the political vicissitudes of the young State. Curtailing their desires, the Bulgarians then asked to have as Prince a Russian General. This was also declined. Instead, Russia consecutively allowed two German Princes to ascend the throne of the new Principality, while other ones were also called to reign over the neighbouring Balkanic States. All

of which practically amounted to abandon deliberately to the Germans the future of the Balkans.

Instead of frankly putting a Russian upon the Bulgarian throne, Russia preferred to keep in the country, as well as to send there, a number of Russian Generals, most of whom being merely soldiers were lacking in political sense. Their attitude, often of a vexatious nature, resulted finally in a reversal of feelings towards Russia which took up the form of a political movement known as "Stamboulovism." Our clumsy policy ultimately led to perfectly amazing results; only a few years had passed since the epic emancipation war, when the Russian Emperor, the son of the Czar-Deliverer, had to write upon a report of his representative at Sofia the fatal resolution: "I demand that all the Russian agents, diplomatic and consular, be recalled from Bulgaria!" So it came to pass that we were compelled ourselves to break up our relations with the country we had just liberated and which but a short time ago had been worshipping Russia's very name. Our enemies could rejoice at ease! But things did not end at that.

The object of the war of 1877-78 had been to deliver Bulgaria from the Ottoman yoke and to release the Christian nations in the Turkish provinces from Mahommedan tyranny. This being so, it would have been but natural on the part of Russia to see to the widest development of the obtained results, that is to bring the Turkish provinces with Christian majorities of Bulgarian nationality into close union with Bulgaria and to let that country attain the highest possible degree of prosperity and independence. Yet it is just the opposite that was done all the time, during the short life of the new Principality!

After Prince Alexander of Battenberg had been expelled and Prince Ferdinand of Coburg elected, Russia declined to recognize him and for a long time turned a cold shoulder on him. As I have just said, it would have been only natural if Russia had resolutely opposed the establishment of a German Prince at Sofia. But once he had been established, would it not have been better policy to accept the situation

and recognize him at once? Such was not, however, the attitude assumed at St. Petersburg; Prince Ferdinand was ignored for years, which, in its turn, made him unpopular among the Bulgarian masses and led him to take one step after the other in order to obtain recognition. Finally he was allowed to come to Russia, but the reception given to him was very reserved; this wounded his feelings and, being of a vindictive nature, he became for ever Russia's enemy.

In 1886 Bulgaria annexed Eastern Roumelia, which had been denied to her by Bismarck and the Berlin Congress. That annexation was nothing but a logical consequence of the 1877-78 war; one should have expected Russia to approve of it and support it; yet it was she who protested, to the great surprise and deception of the Bulgarians.

In 1908 Bulgaria proclaimed her independence. It would certainly have been more natural if that new step in the young country's life had been made under Russia's ægis; but the Russian diplomacy thought differently, and Bulgaria became a kingdom under the patronage of Austria. It should seem that there was nothing else to do but to recognize the accomplished fact, even if there were no reason for particular rejoicing; it was the more easy to do so since the *coup d'état* had been made under Malinoff's pro-Russian Cabinet. But to the great disappointment of the Bulgarian public opinion, it was once more Russia who protested; she refused to recognize the new King and it took a quite fortuitous circumstance—Grand Duke Vladimir's death—to allow the Imperial Government's decision to be circumvented.

It may still be remembered that when Grand Duke Vladimir died, King Ferdinand, who at that time was in Vienna, came to the Russian Embassy to announce that he could not refrain from attending "his best friend's funeral," and that he was, that same night, leaving for St. Petersburg. Before leaving he telegraphed to the widow of the Grand Duke asking for her permission to be present at the funeral. As soon as she got the telegram, the Grand Duchess sent

for me. Being well versed in politics, and in spite of the great sorrow, she understood at once the manœuvre of the new King. She told me that she could not answer the telegram without first hearing the opinion of the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Isvolsky at once submitted the case to the Emperor, suggesting that the Prince of Bulgaria should be received with the honours due to his new royal rank. The Emperor consented, and thus it happened that King Ferdinand was finally recognized.

In 1912 the Christian nations of the Balkans at last concluded among themselves an arrangement aiming at the completion of the work commenced by Russia in 1877 and calculated to deliver from the Ottoman yoke the Christian nations of the Turkish provinces of Macedonia and Thrace. This time, it is true, Russia supported the arrangement; still she did so with all sorts of exceptions and cautious advices which only helped to exasperate the Bulgarians.

The above short sketch, by no means sufficient to exhaust the subject, only goes to show how little consequence and logic there had been in Russia's policy regarding Bulgaria during the thirty years which preceded the World War.

I shall now go back to the negotiations of 1914.

On November 7 (20) my colleagues and myself were instructed to declare to the Bulgarian Government that "in return for her neutrality Bulgaria would receive important territorial advantages. These advantages would be increased if Bulgaria decided to attack Turkey or Austria-Hungary."

In my opinion, that new instruction had one great defect: it was too vague and indefinite to impress the positive mind of the Bulgarians. I therefore requested Sazonoff to complete it, be it only by adding to it the following phrase: "The Governments of the Allied Powers are, however, prepared to discuss later on with the Bulgarian Government the question of territorial acquisitions based upon the treaty of 1912 and the Protocol of London, as well as to specify them in detail."

Sazonoff probably shared my viewpoint and my doubts,

as he approved of my suggestion, although somewhat reticently. He answered on November 10 (23), (No. 3936): "When Bulgaria's attitude towards us has become precise, I shall find no objection to the development of my instruction in the direction suggested by you, but only verbally!"

On November 26 (December 9) the three representatives received instructions to make to the Bulgarian Government another declaration in development of the preceding one: "In return for her neutrality, equitable territorial improvements would be guaranteed to Bulgaria in Macedonia and an extension of her territory as far as the Enos-Midia Line."

These new promises of the Powers, at least those concerning Macedonia, were very nebulous and lacked just as much in precision as the former ones. I did not doubt that declarations such as those we were directed to make on November 11 (24) and 26 (December 9) were doomed to failure. I pointed it out to Sazonoff in my letters of November 19 and 21 (December 2 and 4); I wrote:

"It will be impossible to induce Bulgaria to act unless we make her offers likely to be approved by the public opinion which, in its turn, would compel the Government to accept them without any quibble." And further:

"The instructions I have received up to the present are not quite clear. I cannot see from them whether the Imperial Government wants at any price to induce Bulgaria to enter in action on our side, or would be content to see her remain neutral. My personal opinion being that Bulgaria's entry into the war has a tremendous importance for us, I insist that in order to obtain this result we must use efficacious means. Such would be, in my eyes, to formally guarantee to Bulgaria after the war the territory which had been conceded to her by the Bulgaro-Serbian accord of 1912, as well as the immediate cession to her of the part of Macedonia lying this side of the Vardar. I am not in a position to judge how far my suggestion is feasible from the standpoint of the general political situation, but I am firmly convinced that the offers that are at present being made to Bulgaria shall never be able to persuade her."

My opinion was soon confirmed by a conversation I had with General Fitcheff, the Minister of War. He spoke to me confidentially of a Cabinet meeting at which his report was discussed as to the conditions that could determine Bulgaria to enter into the war on the side of the Triple Entente. "Owing to the lack of precision of the offers made to us," said Fitcheff, "the Council of Ministers resolved to remain neutral."

I reported that conversation to Sazonoff in a letter dated December 15 (28).

SUCH were the presages on the eve of the year 1915. In the middle of January the Duke de Guise, a cousin of King Ferdinand, arrived at Sofia on an official mission. At first it may seem strange that the Government of the Republic should have entrusted with an official mission a Prince of the Royal Family. This is how it happened. As soon as the war broke out, the Duke asked to join the Army. This favour having been declined, he felt hurt in his patriotic feelings, but did not want to remain inactive, and took service in the Red Cross. Here he developed a great and efficient activity, never losing the hope of serving France in some other quality. This is how he came to accept the difficult and delicate mission which the Republican Government, in accordance with the Allies, entrusted him to carry out before his royal cousin in Bulgaria.

While looking around for means of exerting a pressure upon King Ferdinand, the Entente Powers thought of the Duke in the hope that as a near relative he might approach the King not only on the behalf of the Governments, but also, and especially, in the name of the entire Orleans family.

After several interviews at the Quay d'Orsay, the Duke left for Sofia. He travelled incognito, accompanied by a faithful friend. It was only upon landing in Salonika that he sent a telegram to the King informing him of his visit; he feared that otherwise the King would evade the interview. Taken unawares, the King still succeeded for a whole week in finding excuses not to receive his cousin, who meanwhile was living in a hotel just opposite the King's palace. At the end of the week the Duke was summoned to the palace and devoted all his patriotic ardour to prove to

the King all the harm he would cause to Bulgaria by drawing her into a combination hostile to the Entente.

Neither the Duke's argumentation, nor his eloquence, his relationship, and his personal charm, nothing could prevail over the King's set purpose, nor even make him break his obstinate silence. The noble endeavours of the Duke de Guise ended in a complete failure.

When talking about the Duke's visit, Radoslavoff once mentioned to me the difficulty of his position. I could not help answering: "If you really had at heart the interests of your country, it would be easy for you to make up your mind; you should have taken long ago the opportunity, so often offered to you, to begin straightforward negotiations with Russia. Occasions pass by you and you run the risk of letting them slip." Then, alluding to an advance he had just received from Germany, I added: "Instead of turning towards Russia, you accept money from the Germans" (cf. my telegram to Sazonoff of January 28, 1915 (February 10), (No. 51.)

In February the allied fleets obtained some success in the Dardanelles. The Sofia statesmen were deeply impressed and made overtures to me, following which I wrote to St. Petersburg (No. 117): "Concrete offers and promises are expected from us." Meanwhile, I was telling the Bulgarians: "I am afraid you have already let go the favourable moment; let me now give you a bit of friendly advice, quite personal; the only natural move on your part would now be to put all your armed forces at Russia's disposal, unconditionally, simply stating that Bulgaria does so relying upon Russia's goodwill, justice, and magnanimity, so long and so well known to her."

From the political correspondence, copies of which the Ministry for Foreign Affairs forwarded to me (Sazonoff's telegram No. 992), I knew that an eventual landing at Constantinople was being discussed; this led me to wire to Sazonoff on February 25 (March 10), (No. 121):

"If an eventual landing is really being considered and if for some reason it could not be made near Constantinople

but rather in Bulgarian ports, I venture to suggest that, instead of diplomatic negotiations with the Sofia Government, a personal telegram in clear be addressed by His Majesty the Emperor to the King and to the people of Bulgaria. That telegram could state that the measure in view is demanded by the common interests and needs of all the Slavic nations, express the certainty that the step shall be heartily greeted by the Bulgarians and their King; that the entire future of Bulgaria is at stake and that Russia, ever true to her precepts and her traditions, shall never lose sight of the interests of her younger sister who, in her turn, must trust her confidently and implicitly. The entire nation would be enraptured by such a telegram; neither the King nor his Government could resist it. As an excess of prudence though, it should be better to prepare the public opinion; in that respect Monsig. Joseph, the Exarch of Bulgaria, could largely assist us. He is an ardent patriot, a friend of Russia, enjoys a very great influence in the country, and the people hold him in high veneration. His word, which in principle he promised me to say, should carry away the masses."

In the beginning of March a British General, Sir Arthur Paget, stopped at Sofia on his way to St. Petersburg. He was received by the King, but had just as little success with him as the Duke de Guise. His visit coincided with our great success in Galicia. Under the impression of these victories, Radoslavoff once said to me of his own accord: "I notice that the King is of late tending towards a *rap-prochement* with Russia, which on my own part I approve of thoroughly."

(My telegram to Sazonoff, No. 137). In answer to that telegram Sazonoff wired me on March 23 (April 5), (No. 1539): "I have agreed with Sir E. Grey's plan of asking the Bulgarian Government to state definitely whether they agree to join the Allied Powers in return for the cession of Macedonia within the limits of 1912, Monastir included, as well as Thrace as far as the Enos-Midia line." Though its elaboration has taken a long time, this offer could still have led to success. Great were, therefore, my surprise and disappointment when, directly after it, I received



GRAND DUCHESS TATIANA NIKOLAEVNA
Second Daughter of Emperor Nicholas

another urgent telegram (No. 1562) saying : " Please refrain from carrying out the instruction contained in my telegram of March 23 (April 5), (No. 1539), pending further order."

Our military successes in Galicia were still developing, and on March 9 (22) our victorious armies had taken Przemyśl. This did not fail to impress King Ferdinand and his Government, and I telegraphed the fact to Sazonoff (No. 163). The effect produced by our victories was extending, and the language of the Prime Minister was becoming quite different. After a long conversation with him I sent to Sazonoff a personal telegram on March 25 (April 7), (No. 178), stating :

" Radoslavoff assures me he was only waiting for a favourable moment to join in with Russia, but that he thought Bulgaria's support could be valuable even after the fall of Constantinople. I answered that in my opinion he risked to let slip the psychological moment ; that his indecision was arousing against him the ill-favour and mistrust of the Allies and that he overestimated the value of the assistance Bulgaria could lend them when everything would be over. He then gave me to understand that he would prefer Bulgaria to be forced into action and the Government to be placed before an accomplished fact. Seeing what he was driving at, I asked him what the Bulgarian Government's answer would be if a definite reply—' yes or no '—was now demanded from them by the Allies ? To this he said that he would answer ' Yes.' I then asked him to what extent the words of his brother-in-law, Provodaliëff (a member of the National Assembly), had been correctly reported to me, namely, that if the Russians landed on the Black Sea coast and the French and British—at Dede-Agatch, Bulgaria would immediately join them ? To that Radoslavoff answered : ' Two landings would be unnecessary, the Russians' landing should suffice. Knowing it was not directed against us, we would accept it gladly and leave the details to be settled later on of a common accord.' "

After impressing quite categorically upon him the fact that the foregoing conversation was by no means based upon instructions coming from my Government, and that I even did not know whether the question of a landing had

ever been considered, I still availed myself of the opportunity and asked Radoslavoff what he thought about the form an eventual step concerning a landing should be invested in? He unhesitatingly pronounced in favour of a personal discussion with the King: "Should this mode of procedure be adopted, the Government would be free from reproach, in His Majesty's eyes, and its task would be made easier."

The most symptomatic of all was that Radoslavoff's overtures, made of his own accord, were followed by two visits I received in quick succession. One was that of General Savoff, Marshal of the Court, the other one—of M. Dobrovitch, Chief of the King's Privy Cabinet. Until that time both of these Court officials had kept at a certain distance from the Russian Legation. If now they came to see me, it meant that the King had ordered them to do so. Savoff assured me of the interest with which the King watched our military successes; Dobrovitch went as far as to say that Bulgaria was only waiting for the moment when she could repay to Russia her debt of gratitude. Both left me wishing further successes to the Russian arms.

Seeing the reversal of attitude that had taken place both in the Palace and in the Government spheres, I telegraphed to Sazonoff on March 28 (April 10), (No. 204), that: "just now we have reached the psychological moment when it is necessary to act; in agreement with my French and British colleagues, I believe that further hesitation might be dangerous to success." This telegram was followed by letters, detailed and pressing, in which I insisted upon the fact that a Russian landing would be greeted with joy:

"The position of the King and of the Government would be made easier by the accomplished fact, whereas the people and the army would enthusiastically hail the appearance of Russian uniforms. The presence of a comparatively small contingent would draw out the whole country against Turkey. Constantinople could be taken and our historic task in the Straits be achieved once and for all time." I added, however, that the taking of Constantinople should in no case be entrusted to the Bulgarians alone, my idea being

that they should play but a secondary part in the undertaking.

On April 1 (14) I received new instructions (No. 1666). They were still more nebulous than the preceding ones :

" If the Royal Government are ready to join the cause of the Allies, the latter are prepared to look for means going to satisfy their wishes as well as to use their influence and their efforts in order to insure their realization."

I protested against the vagueness of these formulæ (cf. my telegram to Sazonoff, No. 213) and suggested more precise ones. Following my protest, Sazonoff proposed to the Allies certain modifications of the text ; nevertheless to my great disappointment, a telegram, dated April 7 (20), (No. 1768), informed me that : " conforming to the desire of Delcassé," Sazonoff requested me " to refrain from the prescribed action pending further instructions."

The Bulgarian political parties of the opposition were steadily preaching a policy of reconciliation with Russia. These were the " Narodniaks " (J. Gueshoff and T. Thodoroff), the " Democrats " (Malinoff), the " National Progressists " (Daneff), the " Agrarians " (Stamboulisky), and others. Their leaders, all of them ardent patriots, often came to see me and I counted upon their support to fight against the pro-German Policy of Radoslavoff's Cabinet who received their instructions directly from the Palace.

One day, it was on April 24 (May 7), T. Thodoroff came to tell me of a conversation he had had with the President of the Council. The leader of the " Narodniaks " had tried his utmost to prove to Radoslavoff that the ultimate moment had arrived for Bulgaria to enter into the war and to obtain the corresponding advantages. Should the Government agree, he offered them the overt and sincere support of the entire opposition. According to Thodoroff, Radoslavoff seemed to have recognized the justness of his argumentation and asked him two questions : firstly, why Russia did not make any concrete proposals to Bulgaria ; and, secondly, what were my relations with the King ? To the first

question Thodoroff replied that the Entente had already made several attempts to arrive at an understanding with the Bulgarian Government and that it was now the turn of the latter to pronounce themselves. As to my relations with the King, Thodoroff believed they were quite correct.

The same day I reported that conversation to Sazonoff (No. 255), approving of what T. Thodoroff had stated ; I added that Radoslavoff's second question seemed to confirm what I had always maintained, namely that the direction of all the affairs was in the King's hands, his Prime Minister being nothing but a puppet and a coward who never dared to take upon himself any initiative.

Next day Radoslavoff took up the same conversation with me. When reporting it to the Minister, I said in the telegram : " I replied to the Premier that it was not the business of the three great Powers to approach Bulgaria, as they had already sufficiently proved how much they were concerned with her interests of Bulgaria ; it was now her turn to act. To his question whether I could not explain this directly to the King and thus dispel his apprehensions concerning Russia, I replied that I was always and entirely at His Majesty's disposal. I added quite confidentially : ' If I were you, as a good patriot I should not let pass such a convenient moment and should quite fearlessly advise the King to address a personal telegram to His Majesty the Emperor telling him that if Bulgaria had not as yet done her duty towards Russia, it was solely because she had just passed through two wars and, being weakened, she had been reluctant to go to war without it doing any good to herself nor to Russia ; but that now, believing that the Bulgarian Army could be useful to Russia in Thrace, she was putting it entirely and unconditionally at the Emperor's disposal. Such an action, I added, would be appreciated throughout Russia and would undoubtedly be to Bulgaria's advantage.' "

Concerning the interview with the King, which Radoslavoff was seemingly suggesting, I thought it more prudent not to take the initiative of it, since from the beginning of

the war the King ostensibly avoided receiving diplomats for the alleged reason that upon leaving the Palace each of them interpreted in his own way the words he had heard.

The renewal of negotiations demanded by the change of attitude of the Bulgarian Government after our Galician victories and recommended by me in my telegram of March 28 (April 10) was delayed owing to protracted correspondence between the Entente Cabinets; it only took place on May 16 (29). Had it been done, as I had insisted, during the period of our successes in Galicia, after the fall of Przemyśl and during our advance upon Cracow, when our armies, to Germany's terror and Roumania's edification, were descending over the Carpathians upon the Hungarian plain, the results would certainly have been quite different.

But in the beginning of May our hasty retreat from Galicia had already commenced, and the Germans seized upon the opportunity to further their negotiations with the Bulgarians, who once more gave way to hesitancy (cf. my telegram No. 312).

The delay that occurred in the Entente capitals was later explained by the fact that Italy's entry into the war was then expected. Hope was entertained that this new factor would be decisive for Bulgaria.

The Bulgarian Government's reply was naturally deferred. Meanwhile, I kept on untiringly proving to the Bulgarian statesmen how important it would be for their country to secure a "maximum of advantage at a minimum sacrifice," and advised them "not to try the Allies' patience and not to count overmuch upon Russia's inexhaustible magnanimity. The small amount of help demanded should be given by you in time, and without drawing the strings overtight" (cf. my telegram No. 312.)

The Bulgarian reply to our note of May 16 (29) only arrived on June 2 (15). The Bulgarians asked for supplementary information, which clearly showed their intention of further procrastination. Disturbed by the way things

were going, I despatched to Sazonoff on June 13 (26) a very secret and personal telegram (No. 355) :

“ At the most difficult moments the Germans did not lose courage and assured the Bulgarians that they would take back from us both Przemyśl and Lemberg. They now speak of occupying the whole of Galicia, after which shall come the turn of Warsaw, the isolation of our army, and the end of the war. Such utterings of the Austro-German diplomats, supported by articles in their papers, produce an impression against which I have to struggle with all my might. Those of the Bulgarian Ministers who are hostile to us spread those notions among the public at large ; the prestige of the Germans is growing and there appears an atmosphere of hostility against us. That atmosphere is becoming denser still owing to the circulating rumours concerning the intractability of the Serbians who are even said to be angry with us for having made promises to Bulgaria in Macedonia. The last Serbian note has produced more impression here than the taking back of Przemyśl and Lemberg. On the other hand, in spite of the favourable season, the prolonged period of rest enjoyed by their army and the end of the epidemic, the Serbians remain inactive. In such conditions there naturally arises a serious question : are we justified this time in sacrificing our own interests by abstaining from making to Bulgaria such offers as could induce them to an action we so much need ? It might be time to recur to strong action in Serbia in the shape of an extraordinary delegation, or of a letter to the King or Prince Alexander, explaining to the Serbians that we cannot any longer tolerate the refractory attitude they have taken. If, at the beginning of the war, our desire to spare their feelings had not prevented us from making concrete offers to Bulgaria, she would have sided with us long ago. The Serbians’ attitude is being viewed here with great misgivings as to the future ; even the best Bulgarians are wondering how the Powers are going to manage, when the war is over, to induce the Serbians to actually cede the territories the right to which they now deny even in principle to the Bulgarians. It is likely that nothing but coercive measures can lead the Serbians to abandon their intransigent attitude. On the other hand, the march of events may bring about the necessity of making further concessions to

Bulgaria ; it would be more practicable to make them in time, and all of them together, in order not to depreciate them once more. Would it not be preferable, therefore, to warn the Serbians that their obstinacy may lead us to consent to the occupation of Macedonia by Bulgaria, either now, or after the fall of Constantinople ? If, at that time, the Serbian troops are still on the Eastern front, the Bulgarians may be prevented from calling away from the ranks the natives of Macedonia ; this would be easy, since Bulgaria and Serbia would then be allies.

" I have ventured to expose the above considerations because of the importance for us of Bulgaria's entry into the war. But that entry is *out of question* unless territorial concessions in Macedonia are made in return for it. My Serbian colleague, who is leaving to-morrow for Nish, has come to me to inquire about the situation. I thought it advisable not to conceal from him that the stubborn attitude of his Government produces the most painful impression and cannot promote Serbia's interests. Radoslavoff told me to-day that the further attitude of Bulgaria would depend from the reply of the Powers which she is still expecting."

Seeing that the Sofia Cabinet was still hesitant, I once more telegraphed to Sazonoff on June 20 (July 2), (No. 379), suggesting a gradual occupation of Macedonia : " If you consider Bulgaria's entry into the war as indispensable, I can only repeat that it cannot be obtained otherwise than in return for the occupation of Macedonia, even of a part of it. This represents the only means which no Government could oppose without running the risk of being overturned. Indeed, why should the Bulgarians fight the Serbians in order to obtain Macedonia if we can give it to them without their having to fight for it ? As to the mode of occupation, certain gradations could be observed, as well as some measures of precaution taken ; for instance, the occupation might be carried out as soon as Bulgaria enters the war, or else after Constantinople is taken ; in order to spare Serbia's *amour-propre* it might be carried out not by Bulgarians but by Allied forces. . . . I hear from well-informed sources that the Germans, being resolved at any cost to break through to Constantinople, are preparing to throw against

Serbia a strong army commanded by Mackensen and to crush her definitely. In such a case King Ferdinand shall have no other alternative but to protest perfunctorily and to let the German troops pass through the Bulgarians' territory. Your Excellency may judge whether such an occurrence would be desirable from the standpoint of Russian interests ? "

On June 29 (July 12), (No. 395), I had an opportunity to repeat to Sazonoff my conviction that the occupation of Macedonia was the only way for us out of the blind alley we were in. It related to a suggestion offered to the Allies on June 18 (July 1), (No. 3104), by the Minister for Foreign Affairs; in view of the impossibility of reconciling the contradictory demands of the Balkanic States, he proposed to discriminate between them, to enforce some sacrifices upon the Serbians and thus to secure Bulgarian support.

I namely telegraphed that :

" It is impossible to obtain Bulgaria's aid without first giving her a 'real' guarantee in the shape of the occupation, be it a partial one, of Macedonia. It goes without saying that the occupation should only be permitted after Bulgaria had actually gone to war, or even after the fall of Constantinople. On the other hand, when allowing the Bulgarians to proceed to it, and in order not to depreciate in the eyes of the public opinion the value of our offer, we ought to warn Bulgaria that this time we would tolerate no delay whatever and that, should there be no immediate answer, we would be obliged to make our offer generally known through the Press. Supposing, however, that for some reason I cannot imagine, the occupation of Macedonia were considered impossible before the end of the war, there would remain no alternative but to recur to the plan suggested by Sonnino and Delcassé (cf. Isvolsky's telegram No. 387 from Paris), who proposed to demand from the Bulgarian Government to name the term, precise and near, when they would join the war. In order to prevent that demand from being interpreted as a menace or an ultimatum, it could be explained to the Bulgarians in a friendly way, that since we had furnished them, amicably and favourably, with all the data asked for in their note of May 16 (29),

we were now obliged to insist upon a fixed date, and this for the sole reason that in case of further tergiversations on their part the Allies would have to think of other combinations to safeguard their own vital interests ; should that be the case, they would consider themselves as free from any promise hitherto made to Bulgaria.—The above considerations are the result of a conference with the four allied Ministers who assembled here to-day and who intend to submit them at once to their respective Governments."

On July 1 (14) I had a new conversation with Radoslavoff ; he reminded me what he had told me in September, 1914, concerning Bulgaria's entry into the war, an act which he had even then considered as subordinate to Russia's permission to occupy Macedonia. I once more tried to explain that such a permission could not be granted before the end of the war ; I asked him, however, as a private query, whether the cession of a part of Macedonia could really induce Bulgaria to go to war ?—" That would put us in a tight place," he replied, " but in such conditions Bulgaria would have no other alternative but to join Russia."

I at once reported that significant conversation to Sazonoff (my telegram of July 1 (14), (No. 405), stating that the eventuality of Bulgaria going to war on the Allies' side was being ever more persistently considered in most different circles here, but always upon the condition of securing guarantees of " a real kind." If only some means could be devised to offer such guarantees to Bulgaria, she could not resist any longer.

That same obsessing idea of " real guarantees " came up again a few days later in another conversation between General Boïadjeff, and our Naval Attaché. The Chief of the General Staff, a Macedonian by birth, asked Captain Iakovleff when and where our landing was to take place. Captain Iakovleff having said he did not know anything about it, the General suggested the port of Burgas as being, for technical reasons, more convenient than the coast of Midia ; he then added : " Bulgaria would consent to it very willingly, provided she obtained ' real guarantees.' "

In the meantime my three colleagues, French, British, and Italian, received the text of the proposed answer to the Bulgarian Government.

I saw at a glance that it was just as unlikely to satisfy the Bulgarians as the preceding one. I took advantage of the fact that my copy had been delayed in transmission and wired to Sazonoff on July 4 (17), (No. 411), that "since it is necessary this time to make to Bulgaria broad offers, capable of carrying away the whole nation, such offers should also be made authoritatively, nearly in the form of an ultimatum, so as not to allow of any hesitancy, neither on the part of the King, nor of his Government. Sentimental considerations regarding the Serbians are now out of place ; especially so since knowing very well that there are no Austrian troops beyond the Sava and the Danube, everything having been rushed off to the Italian and Galician fronts, the Serbians still do not march in that direction, in spite of all our insistence, but operate against our desire in the direction of Albania and the Adriatic coast. It may be, of course, that I have not all the necessary data to judge competently of Serbia's behaviour ; but, as far as Bulgaria is concerned, I make bold to affirm once more that *all our offers other than the occupation of Macedonia are bound to fail* and, in my opinion, it should be better not to make them at all."

In another telegram sent the same day (No. 412) I added :

"It would more conform to the dignity and the prestige of the Powers, not to speak of the interests of Russia, *to make of their own accord* the offers the necessity of which they now realize and which the circumstances may later compel them to make."

Knowing from my own personal experience that subordinates who believe in a cause may sometimes lead it to triumph with their chiefs, I made use of my old comradeship and friendly terms with Goulkevitch, then in charge of the Balkanic Affairs at the Ministry. On July 7 (20) I telegraphed him, among other things :

" My colleagues and myself are still profoundly convinced that at this moment there are no other means to force Bulgaria into action *except the cession of at least a part of Macedonia*; in our opinion the whole question amounts to know in what measure Bulgaria's entry into the war is indispensable to us. If it is, we think that there are ways to proceed to the occupation of Macedonia with Bulgarian or Allied forces in such a way as to deprive that act of any character of hostility towards Serbia. A personal letter might, for instance, be addressed to the Regent; a reference could be made to his telegram to the Emperor at the outbreak of the war; he could be reminded that of his own accord he had then put his entire country at His Majesty's disposal; or else Pashitch could be informed, etc. . . . On the other hand, the presence of the Allied forces between the Serbians and the Bulgarians would act as a preventive measure both of a moral and material order."

I have never been able to understand why Sazonoff was so opposed to the occupation of Macedonia, especially since I knew from a telegram from Giers in Rome July 11 (27), (No. 264), that his fears were not at all shared either by Sir E. Grey or by Sonnino.

Our hesitancy in that question was interpreted at Sofia as a sign of weakness and the general atmosphere at Sofia, especially since our military reverses, was becoming ever less favourable to us. I felt it intensely, and July 15 (28) I wired to Sazonoff (No. 447) :

" Until now the Bulgarians had to choose between two issues : to keep neutral, or to co-operate *with us*. Now, there is no longer any question of neutrality and they are facing another dilemma : co-operation with us or indirect hostility towards us, the latter being represented by a *manu militari* occupation of Macedonia. Harvest time, due in about six weeks, shall be the signal for taking one of the two decisions, which will then be taken according to interests both political and economic. The latter are going to play a decisive part seeing that at present the two issues from the country, the Danube and the port of Dede-Agatch, are closed, while all the political parties agree in demanding

this economic isolation to be ended, especially since this year's crops are plentiful.

"Military measures, preparatory to the occupation of Macedonia, are already being taken : the three southern divisions have been numerically reinforced and manœuvres on the Græco-Serbian frontier are announced for the month of August. Apart from economic reasons, German propaganda has to be seriously taken into consideration ; it is overtly conducted there, as well as in Roumania. The Germans are anxious to save at any cost Turkey and Constantinople and are pushing Bulgaria in the direction of Macedonia. They are doing it both insistently and cunningly ; they neither offer to the Bulgarians an alliance, nor do they preach them open rupture with us. They merely try to set them against their old enemies the Serbians. Still I have reasons to believe that the Bulgarians would prefer to receive Macedonia from us, rather than from the Germans, but something real must be offered them for that. As it appears that even a partial occupation of Macedonia, be it by Allied troops, is held to be infeasible, other means ought to be devised. Would it not be possible, while guaranteeing to Bulgaria the cession of Macedonia after the war, to let her occupy at once the Greek territories : Kavala, Drama, and Seres ?—To sum up : *we have to consider at present the near possibility of Macedonia being occupied without our consent.* The Military Attaché has a good deal of technical information going to prove that the Bulgarians have the firm intention to occupy Macedonia by force. During my conversations with Radoslavoff, Dobrovitch (the Chief of the King's Privy Cabinet), Vladoff (the most active of the five members of the Macedonian Central Committee), as well as with others, I am pointing out to them the new trap the Germans are setting for them ; I warn them against a new adventure, the consequences of which should be more dangerous than that of 1913, and I use all the arguments I have. Only yesterday Dobrovitch wanted to see me. After listening to all I had to say, he assured me that Bulgaria fully realized that she had nothing to gain by remaining neutral, but that neither the King, nor the Government wanted to pursue a policy of adventures. 'By attacking Turkey,' he added, 'Bulgaria would repay her debt to her deliverer and act conformally to her own interests.' There is no doubt that these words were inspired by the King.

But what is their real meaning? Is it not a trick, habitual in this country, to try and put to sleep our vigilance while a decision has already been taken?"

During that time the British Government had decided to recall their representative in Sofia and to appoint at his post Mr. O'Beirne, who up to that time had been Councillor of the British Embassy in St. Petersburg.

On July 19 (August 1) I received fresh instructions from the Minister (No. 3718) concerning a joint action to be taken before the Sofia Government. Sazonoff's telegram said: "I have approved the text of the instructions prepared by the British Government, but without mentioning the concessions which the Powers might intend making to Roumania."

As compared with old ones, these instructions contained but one important addition, namely that "all the territorial additions to Serbia and to Greece should be subordinate to the previous transmission of Macedonia to Bulgaria."

Both Sazonoff and the Allies probably had their doubts as to the acceptability of these new offers on Bulgaria's part. As soon as the next day, July 20 (August 2), I received an additional telegram (No. 3729) from Sazonoff requesting me to inform Radoslavoff, confidentially and verbally, that "if he did not consider as sufficient the guarantees offered, the Allies had in view other efficacious means of pressure upon Serbia, which should preclude in future every possibility of a conflict between Serbia and Bulgaria."

At the same time Sir E. Grey instructed my British colleague to inform Radoslavoff, when delivering to him the new note, that the document did not mention the occupation by the Allies of the part of Macedonia lying beyond the Vardar because the Serbian reply concerning that point had not yet been received; but that, if the present proposal were accepted by the Bulgarian Government, the Powers would proceed to energetic steps at Nish in order to ensure that occupation.

The above documents go to prove that in spite of the energetic instructions he was sending to Troubetzkoy in

Nish, Sazonoff still did not want to proceed to the occupation of Macedonia, even on this side of the Vardar. The first instruction received by O'Beirne definitely mentioned that occupation; but it was not referred to in his instruction dated July 19 (August 1) which had been approved by Sazonoff.

On July 21 (August 3) the four Ministers delivered to Radoslavoff identical notes which, as was to be expected, had no greater success than the preceding ones. The Bulgarian Government did not answer them before the moment when we laid before them fresh proposals on September 1 (14).

Noticing the indecision and vacillation of the Sofia Cabinet, I decided to resort to the aid of public opinion in order to press them to accept our offers. In view of this I multiplied my efforts with the party leaders, the statesmen, and the members of Parliament, urging them to unite for the sake of their country. My endeavours found a favourable ground: the opposition parties arrived at an understanding, and their leaders—Malinoff, Gueshoff, Stamboulisky, and Daneff—asked for an interview with the Prime Minister.

Radoslavoff asked me what he was to do if they requested him to disclose the terms of our offer. I suggested that without showing the text he might acquaint them with its contents, which could not fail to satisfy any Bulgarian patriot. After their interview with the Prime Minister the opposition leaders carried away the impression, similar to my own, that the decision of the Government would depend from the reply of Greece and especially of Serbia. I hastily reported this to Sazonoff on August 1 (14), (No. 504).

It was quite evident that concomitantly with the intractability of the Serbians our chances of success in Sofia were getting lower. On August 6 (19) I telegraphed again to Sazonoff, as well as to Troubetzkoy in Nish (No. 519):

“A deputy, belonging to Radoslavoff's party, but devoted to Russia, and seeing Bulgaria's salvation in her unity with Russia, came to see me to-day and informed me confidentially

that the Government had decided not to accept the proposals of the Entente and to attack Serbia. All the necessary preparations are already on foot. General Jekoff, the new Minister of War, said yesterday to the same deputy that Bulgaria would march against anybody but Turkey. In view of the above it becomes more important than ever that the Serbians should give as soon as possible a satisfactory reply; otherwise the Bulgarians will have an excellent pretext to explain their policy of adventures. A conciliatory reply from Serbia shall make Radoslavoff lose ground with public opinion."

The events developed in rapid succession, and on August 8 (21) I had to report additional information (No. 531):

"Generally well-informed persons report insistently both to me and to the Military Attaché some news that corroborate my last telegram. The King is said to have told Radoslavoff that the time had arrived when Bulgaria must take her stand and attack the Serbians. The Prime Minister having answered that there existed some adversaries of that plan among the Cabinet, the King is said to have authorized Radoslavoff to remodel the Cabinet accordingly. The Ministers, coming out after yesterday's council, which lasted for an exceptionally long time, let it be understood that exceedingly important decisions had been arrived at, and that those of the Ministers who were going to be dismissed had not attended the council. There is renewed talk about sending Bulgarian partisan-bands ('Tchety') across the Serbian frontier, of a concentration of troops and supplies around Viddin and Radomir, of the transfer to the Generals commanding divisions of the funds required for mobilization purposes, and so on. The Commander-in-Chief, Savoff, a friend of the present Minister of War, has just arrived at Sofia.

"Similarly to the superhuman efforts they sustain against us on the front, the Austro-Germans are doing here everything in their power in order to prove, map in hand, to the Bulgarians that our army is doomed to complete defeat and that the military situation of the Entente in general is quite desperate. In spite of all the energy we display, Colonel Tatarinoff and myself, to dispel such insidious calumnies, they still produce a strong impression and create a very

uneasy atmosphere. I am ready to admit a certain amount of bluff in that matter on the part of the Government who want to induce us to exert a stronger pressure upon the Serbians ; but, on the other hand, there is no denying such facts as the appointment of a young Minister of War, an avowed friend of the Germans, and the military preparations that are going on. It is not impossible that these preparations are being made without having any precise object in view, just in order to be ready for any emergency ; but as soon as it becomes apparent that the Allies are unable to enforce their will upon the Serbians, the decisive and dangerous moment shall have arrived."

The general situation was really becoming very alarming. I discussed that subject very seriously with Radoslavoff and reported the conversation to Sazonoff in the following telegram (No. 533) :

" I began by expressing to Radoslavoff my fears that something irreparable had already been done. I inquired about the appointment of General Jekoff in replacement of General Fitcheff, about the meaning of other changes in the Cabinet, and about the motive of the military preparations ; I quite specially drew his attention to the formation of bands destined to provoke the Serbians in order to make the latter responsible for an eventual war. I reminded him that any hostile action against Serbia would be looked upon by the Allies as being directed against them. I explained to him the true value of the successes the Germans are now boasting of, and said that they were making a last desperate effort in the illusory hope of concluding a separate peace with Russia ; that they wanted above all to avoid another winter campaign and to bluff the neutral Powers, an aim which their diplomats pursued as eagerly as their military commanders followed their own.

" Radoslavoff did not deny the intensity of the effort made by the Austrian diplomacy and admitted the great impression produced by the German military successes. I then made an appeal to the good judgment of the Bulgarian nation and to their vital interests which, if rightly understood, ought to prevent them from committing an irreparable mistake after having resisted so long the Germans' temptations, just at the moment when our negotiations with the

Serbians were nearing completion. I insisted upon the fact that Bulgaria's interests would be much more securely and soundly protected by Russia than by Austria and Germany, these enemies of the Slavic nations, only dreaming in their selfishness of obtaining Salonika and Constantinople. I realized from Radoslavoff's answers that his will was entirely dominated by that of his Sovereign and that his ultimate attitude would depend upon King Ferdinand's own decision. The only thing Radoslavoff affirmed quite definitely was that no decision had as yet been taken and that none would be taken before the receipt of the Serbian reply. He denied all the symptoms that were worrying me."

The situation obtaining in Sofia could not be viewed with indifference in St. Petersburg, as it is to be seen from Sazonoff's telegram on August 8 (21), (No. 4060) :

" Please find a favourable moment and inform Radoslavoff simultaneously with your colleagues that independently from the circumstances the Powers pledge themselves that after the war Bulgaria shall obtain in Macedonia the line of 1912 provided she takes the field against Turkey in conformity with our demands."

While looking for means to save the situation, I again thought of appealing to the public opinion. It occurred to me to induce the opposition parties to pronounce themselves openly against a policy likely to lead to a new catastrophe. After long negotiations I finally succeeded, and an alarm-cry raised by all six opposition leaders appeared upon the same day in all papers. I reported it to Sazonoff on August 14 (27), (No. 550) :

" The six opposition parties have made a collective move against every kind of policy of adventures. The ' Democrats,' the ' Narodniaks,' the ' Liberal Progressists,' and the ' Radicals ' were supported by the numerous and influential ' Agrarians ' together with the ' Broad Socialists,' whose leader, Sakyzoff, had hitherto refrained from any contact, however innocent, with the other parties. Their appeal, published on August 13 (26), has produced a strong impression. The Opposition protests against the Government's refusal to convoke the House at such an important

moment, peremptorily demands that the policy of adventures be abandoned and invites the entire nation to join in that demand."

At that moment the Duke Johann-Albert of Mecklenburg-Schwerin arrived again in Sofia.

The Duke's personality is well known. Purely German in his convictions, he was often used by Emperor William in particularly thorny cases. It is he who was entrusted with the Regency of the Duchy of Brunswick when, upon the death of the last Duke, the representative of the younger, Hanover, branch asserted his rights to the Dukedom. He was also sent by the Kaiser on secret missions to the Sultan when he wanted to instil to the Porte the German point of view in political questions. It was obvious that when sending the Duke of Mecklenburg to Sofia, just after we had been forced to evacuate Warsaw, the German Emperor was confident that he would succeed in brushing away King Ferdinand's last scruples. Besides, my information agents found out for me the very arguments he used in that particular case :

"The Duke's mission to persuade the King and his Government to join the Austro-German-Turkish alliance and to attack Serbia. His argumentation runs as follows : The collapse of Russia has already commenced. The fall of Vilna may be expected every day, and its fall will constitute a menace to Petrograd. The plan of advance upon Kiev is being carried out ; its completion is going to make the Germans the masters in the Russian provinces bordering upon Roumania and cut her off from Russia, thus compelling her to join Germany. According to my informers, that chain of reasoning, for all it is worth, is said to have produced a considerable impression " Cf. my telegram to the Minister dated August 18 (31), (No. 569).

In the meantime nothing happened that could unload the atmosphere in Sofia which was becoming ever more electric. Serbia's reply was still pending and, judging from the rumours our enemies were readily spreading, it was going to be far from satisfactory for us ; on the other hand, the

Duke of Mecklenburg's propaganda was successful and made still more apparent the weakness of the Allies.

I have already stated that about that time the British Government had decided to send Mr. O'Beirne to Sofia to take up the place of their former representative there. My French colleague and I had known him for a long time. We were pleased at his coming and were sure that he would expose in London the political situation in Bulgaria in its real aspect. The only thing we regretted was that he was coming so late, not knowing exactly what point the Bulgaro-German negotiations had reached; we, however, had reason to believe them to be much farther advanced than our interests required. Therefore there was no time to waste and we wanted to assist our new colleague in grasping as quick as possible the situation as a whole. To that end I arranged to give in his honour an official dinner with the Cabinet Ministers and the officers of the Court, followed by a big rout to which I invited my colleagues of the Diplomatic Corps as well as all the influential politicians and representatives of the local and foreign Press. My intention was to let O'Beirne meet at once all those he ought to know, converse directly with them, and arrange all the appointments he might wish to.

Among the guests I had Stamboulisky, then chief leader of the Agrarian party, who was a clever man, and enjoyed a high consideration in the party he represented. He spoke no foreign language and was not generally known among the diplomats. In that respect I represented an exception, and he came to me from time to time in order to find out what Bulgaria could gain if she decided to side up with the Entente. I liked to talk to him, knowing that his party included the majority of the country and could be of great use to us. When Stamboulisky made his appearance at my rout wearing his peasant's costume he created quite a sensation.

As soon as O'Beirne had arrived, I explained to him the situation as I understood it; I did not want him, however, to make his report to London before having seen for himself

whether my opinion was correct, namely that the only way of winning Bulgaria over to our side was to allow her to occupy Macedonia. It was all the more important to see O'Beirne adopt that point of view, since his predecessor was of opinion that nothing could detach Bulgaria from Germany, and told so to his Government, insisting upon the uselessness of any promises to Bulgaria.

Two or three days after the dinner O'Beirne came to tell me that he entirely shared my opinion and would at once telegraph in that sense to London, but that he doubted of success. He had arrived straight from London where he had a long conversation with Sir E. Grey. The latter's decisions concerning the occupation of Macedonia had all been based upon the reports of the British representative in Sofia, and he was thoroughly opposed to the occupation. "I believe, however," added O'Beirne, "that it is the only thing that could save the situation, and I will send my report to-day, couched in the most pressing terms." I was very happy to learn that O'Beirne's clear and dexterous mind had obtained such a correct view of the situation, and I warmly encouraged him to support with his Government the plan I had unsuccessfully advocated for such a long time. "Our Governments shall at last be persuaded," I added. "Do not be so sure, my dear friend," he replied; "personally I am convinced that there is nothing else to be done, and I will say so categorically, in my telegram, but I am afraid the answer will be a net refusal; they seem to have made up their minds definitely at the Foreign Office." "Try all the same, and good luck to you," I retorted, "in any case we shall have nothing to reproach ourselves later on!"

Less than twenty-four hours later O'Beirne called me up on the telephone. He said he had received a favourable reply from London and he wanted to come at once and talk it over. Interpreted by a clever and unprejudiced man, the all-important question of the occupation of Macedonia had at once been appraised in London at its true value.

O'Beirne read me Sir E. Grey's telegram and we decided to meet at once with our French and Italian colleagues in



order to discuss what we should do next. We worked out the text of a note to be presented to the Bulgarian Government; seeing that the Sofia Cabinet was aware of our military reverses in Poland, and in order to avoid a negative reply, we decided to request our Governments not to give to that note the character of an ultimatum. We thought it more prudent to leave a way out and not to burn our ships. Our draft contained two new points: namely the annexation of Macedonia by Bulgaria after the end of the war was guaranteed "without other conditions of any kind whatsoever"; secondly, the Allies pledged themselves "as soon as the Bulgarians would have entered into action against the Turks, to send, concertedly with the Serbian Government, their troops to occupy the part of Macedonia lying beyond the Vardar" (cf. my telegrams 567 and 568).

By the addition of these two points we intended, in the first place, to show to Bulgaria that the annexation of Macedonia was in no way subordinate to the territorial acquisitions of Serbia and Greece; in the second place, we wanted to dispel the apprehensions of the Bulgarians concerning the possible attitude of the Serbians, that attitude being a subject of great concern to Bulgaria.

In full fairness I must state that Bulgaria's fears were by no means unfounded. On August 19 (September 1) the Serbian Government handed their reply to the Allied representatives at Nish. I am sorry I have not got a copy of that document. One could never have expected from Serbia such violent language, nor such unlimited pretensions. When reading it together with Mr. de Panafieu, we were both of us literally amazed.

Much as the Serbians' complaints were justified in September, 1915, when the Allies had prevented them from falling upon the Bulgarians who had not yet completed the concentration of their troops—so much more had their irreconcilable attitude been unreasonable and unexcusable during the entire war, especially so since the war had been precipitated because of them and since they had been assured by the Allies that their interests would be protected.

The intransigency of the Serbians was partly due to the misconceived sympathy displayed towards them by some of our Allies on the ground of the ill-treatment the Austrians had inflicted on them, of the ignominious attack Serbia had been subject to and the gallant defence she opposed ; on the other hand, basing themselves upon the reports of the British representative in Sofia, the London Cabinet acted in the belief that Bulgaria's attitude was a definitely settled one since the beginning of the war and that all attempts to win Bulgaria over to the side of the Allies were in advance doomed to failure. Hence the natural desire to avoid any unnecessary pressure upon Serbia and the reluctance to take away from her the territories, the cession of which to Bulgaria allegedly could not induce her to act as the Allies wanted.

I assert that such a view of Bulgaria's attitude at the outset of the war was entirely erroneous ; if eventually she joined our enemies it was entirely our own fault. I must say that Great Britain finished by admitting that, too, as may be seen from the instructions given to O'Beirne concerning the occupation of Macedonia as from the mission given in 1915 to Mr. Chirol of *The Times*. That publicist was known for his energy and served as a liaison officer between the British Government and the great official organ. When sending him to the Balkanic States at such a serious moment, the London Cabinet had instructed him to inquire into the Balkanic dispositions and to exert, if necessary, a pressure upon the Serbians. His sojourn in Sofia gave him reason to believe that, in spite of the wasted time, everything was not yet lost, and he left in a hurry for Nish. But he, too, met with an attitude of entire intractability. Then, rather discouraged, he came back to Bulgaria. O'Beirne jokingly called him " Queen Elizabeth," meaning that he had been despatched to Serbia and Bulgaria as a large dreadnought destined to force the enemies' positions with the fire of his big guns. Well, even such heavy guns did not succeed in battering down the stubborn resistance of the Serbians.

The Serbian note to the Powers was rendering the situation

still more inextricable. On August 22 (September 4) I telegraphed to Sazonoff (No. 589) :

" The Serbian reply, being interpreted here in a way detrimental to our interests, shall provide Bulgaria with a new pretext to assure that she still holds to her alleged neutrality so favourable in fact to our enemies. Our aim, however, was not to prolong her perfidious neutrality, but to induce Bulgaria to join us. Consequently my colleagues' and my own opinion is that the Serbian reply does not eliminate the measures suggested in my telegram No. 568 (see above). A decision of the Powers to carry out their intentions and promises in spite of the Serbian note could not fail to produce its effect here. Obviously the occupation of the Macedonian territory lying this side of the Vardar could not now be carried out 'concertedly' with the Serbians; we could therefore ask squarely the Bulgarian Government whether they desire it, or not. If they do, we ought to give out at Nish a definitely settled decision. My colleagues and I are firmly convinced that the Serbians should yield to it.

" When, in the course of my last conversation with my Serbian colleague (cf. my telegram No. 572), I told him that the Powers would finish by losing their patience and would act without consulting Nish, he answered : ' This would be much better and easier for the Serbian Government, who then would no longer have to give their consent and who would simply yield before an accomplished fact, or before the clearly expressed will of the Powers.' If it comes to be decided to guarantee Macedonia to Bulgaria independently from the circumstances, and to proceed immediately to the occupation of a part of its territory, I believe that such a decision ought to be made public so as to put the Bulgarian Government at the foot of the wall; they would then be bound either to accept our terms, or to resign."

Meantime, the Duke of Mecklenburg proceeded with his work and was rather successful. He was assisted by Mr. Rosenberg, the Director for Balkanic Affairs at the Wilhelmstrasse, who arrived in Sofia to see to the technical side of the arrangement. Being reluctant to give up the game before I had tried every means possible, I went to see

Radoslavoff. The long conversation I had with him is summarized in the following telegram to Sazonoff (August 22 (September 4), (No. 580) :

" The Duke of Mecklenburg is here, working hard ; Radoslavoff admits that the Germans are doing all they can to dazzle the Bulgarians by the most alluring perspectives. Obviously using himself the arguments of the Germans, he even insisted upon the danger that might result for Bulgaria from the fall of Constantinople into the Russians' hands. I indignantly refuted that remark, explaining my opinion in details. Then, checking himself, he said that this was not the point of view of the Government, but that of the public opinion. He then spoke of the ill-feeling prevailing in Russia against Bulgaria ; he quoted a phrase, said to have been pronounced in high quarters, concerning territorial concessions to Bulgaria : ' No compensations to that treacherous State, we shall divide it among its neighbours ! ' To that I replied that although our public opinion had many reasons to feel embittered against Bulgaria, a frank and decisive action of that country against the Turks still could put everything straight again. When, developing my thought, I said that it would be sheer madness on the part of Bulgaria to throw herself into the jaws of the wolf, Radoslavoff exclaimed : ' It may be that the Supreme Chief does yield to the German temptations, but he does not own to it before the Government ! '

" By way of conclusion I declared categorically to Radoslavoff that if Bulgaria once more betrayed Russia, our public opinion would never forgive it."

In another telegram sent on August 27 (September 9), (No. 613), I tried to induce Sazonoff to more energetic actions :

" The best way to prevail upon Bulgaria's decisions would be to occupy at once by Allied forces the whole of the ' undeniable ' zone of Macedonia and to issue an explicit declaration, both to Bulgaria and to Serbia, that after the end of the war the Powers will dispose of the occupied territory according to the merits of each."

This telegram coincided with one from my colleague at Nish, in which Prince Troubetzkoy expressed almost the

same view ; he namely suggested " to occupy as quickly as possible Macedonia, including Salonika, and to prevent Austria and Germany from closing ranks with Turkey and Bulgaria." He argued very judiciously, saying that the Bulgarians would not move until the Germans would have forced Tekia, but that as soon as the Germans' troops would appear on the Bulgarian frontier, they would let them pass without resistance and would probably themselves occupy Macedonia.

Next day, August 28 (September 10), (No. 615), I again urged the Minister, " in view of all the threatening dangers, to act as speedily and vigorously as possible in the direction suggested in my preceding telegram."

In the meantime I happened to hear of a significant conversation between Mr. Mach, correspondent of the *Kölnische Zeitung*, with Daneff, the pro-Russian leader of the " National-Progressive " party. The object of the talk, obviously inspired by the Wilhelmstrasse, was to win over to the German cause those of the Bulgarian political parties that were gravitating towards Russia. This is approximately what Mr. Mach said to Daneff, as reported by me to Sazonoff on August 28 (September 10), (No. 617) :

" The Germans have decided to stop for a time their advance against Russia and to detach from their forces there an army, one million strong, to be thrown either upon Tekia or upon Viddin, in order to break through to Constantinople. A certain part of that army would be left in Hungary to guard against a possible action on the part of Roumania, while another part would operate against Serbia. In return for letting the Germans pass across her territory, and pretexting the need she had of a strong Bulgaria, Germany would offer to her both zones of Macedonia together with certain parts of old Serbia.

" Daneff having expressed some doubt as to the advantage such a scheme could offer to Bulgaria, especially since Austria's route towards Salonika lay over Macedonia, Mach is said to have replied that it had been resolved in Berlin not to count any longer with Austria and to consider henceforth no other interests, but purely German ones."

During that troubled and distressing period I went on seeing Radoslavoff, nearly daily, still hoping to prevent him from an irreparable step ; each time, however, I felt more convinced that he was nothing more than a puppet at the hands of the King and of the Germans.

On August 29 (September 11) our conversation fell upon the subject of an eventual passage of the German troops over Bulgarian territory. He admitted that in such a case, being unable to oppose it, Bulgaria, while formally protesting, *would be compelled to submit to the accomplished fact*. At that occasion he reminded me of our talk, in September last year (cf. my telegram No. 273), about a landing of the Russian troops on the Bulgarian coast.

Following this conversation, I wired to Sazonoff on August 29 (September 11), (No. 621) :

" I remarked very sharply to Radoslavoff that if what we had been talking about really happened, all the responsibility for having allowed the Germans to penetrate in the Balkans would rest with the Bulgarian Government. Instead of declaring, as her neighbours had done, that she would not tolerate any violation of her territory, Bulgaria was encouraging the policy of the Germans, a policy as detrimental to Bulgaria as to the other Slavic countries in general. In spite of all I could say, Radoslavoff persisted in his opinion : ' If I am still in office, and if the King does not decide otherwise, I shall suggest not to oppose by force the entry of the Germans into Bulgaria.' I tried once more to prove to him that Bulgaria's true interests lay in fighting Turkey ; to which he replied that the Tchataldja fortifications were much too strong, that the Dardanelles were impregnable, and that a war against the Serbians, and especially against the Roumanians, would be far more intelligible for the Bulgarian people."

On September 1 (14) the four representatives of the Entente were instructed to make new proposals to the Bulgarian Government. When reporting to St. Petersburg the text of the identical notes we had delivered to Radoslavoff, I joined to it a telegram (No. 629), drawing the attention of the Imperial Government to fresh symptoms

showing the intention of the Germans to force the Bulgarian frontier :

- " 1. Enormous provisions of wool, maize, and other products have been purchased on behalf of the German Government and are stored along the banks of the Danube. Barges and other means of transportation have also been acquired in great numbers. The purchasers who have disbursed scores of millions for that purpose openly say that they will soon recover their funds since about the end of September navigation upon the Danube will be free and all the purchased stores will be shipped to Austria.
- " 2. The 'Balkan Bank' in Sofia, which is chiefly operating with Austrian and German capitals, has suspended its credits in Bulgaria.
- " 3. The Bulgarian 'Bank of Credit' has ordered all its branches to draw their deposits from the banks belonging to the Entente countries.
- " 4. The German Military Attaché in Sofia—the son of von der Goltz Pacha—has just been relieved and succeeded by General Massau who, at the beginning of the war, was Chief of Staff of the First Army Corps in Oriental Prussia, and before that Military Attaché in Bulgaria; besides knowing the local conditions, he is said to be an excellent General-Staff Officer.

" There are also persistent rumours concerning the transportation of troops in Hungary along the Roumanian border, concentration of forces around Temeshvar and the fortification of the Roumanian frontier in Hungary. All that leads to suppose, this time with a considerable degree of probability, that being unable to transport munitions and armaments to Constantinople, via Bulgaria and Roumania, as freely as they would like to do, the Germans are determined to force their way to Stamboul. My colleagues and myself believe that the only means to prevent the realization of that plan would be for the Allied forces to occupy as swiftly as possible the Vardar Valley, beginning from Salonika. Besides, it would be certainly very useful if we made at the same time a landing on the Bulgarian and Turkish coasts, since, according to information obtained by

our Military Attaché, there are no troops either in Anatolia or in Thrace. I apologize for touching upon this question in the absence of sufficient knowledge of the general situation, both military and political, but from the standpoint of the interests we are entrusted with, we believe the suggested means to be the only one capable of impressing the Bulgarians, of compelling them to count with us and of frustrating the German plan. If our suggestion were accepted not one single moment should be lost."

The moment was drawing near when Bulgaria should have to take a definite resolution. The seriousness of the situation imposed upon me a twofold duty; to enlighten the public opinion in the country and to guide it as far as possible in conformity with our interests. I have already shown the importance I attached to the Press and to publicity. My work in that direction was made easier by my firm belief that the interests of both countries were the same. There was no need for me to act like the Germans and to buy human consciences according to the principle that none of them are above seducement provided that the right price is offered. The problem I faced amounted to present to the Bulgarians the true aspect of the question, using for that purpose nothing but clean and honest means. It was nothing but sincere on my part to state that what was profitable to Russia was just as profitable to Bulgaria, and vice versa. I am bound to state, though, that the great majority of the Bulgarians felt and thought exactly as I did. Under such conditions the only thing I had to do was to obtain the necessary material means; but to do so, the inertia of the Ministerial offices in St. Petersburg had first to be overcome. I put together all the needed arguments in a telegram I sent to Sazonoff on September 1 (14), (No. 631):

"It is most urgently necessary to counteract vigorously the German propaganda in Bulgaria, upon which enormous sums are being spent here by the German Legation. With the insignificant sum of forty thousand francs, that I obtained here from a countryman who was passing in Sofia, we have succeeded in creating three new papers, two

of which, the *Entente Balkanique* and the *Opinion Libre*, have become most popular. The third one, the *Courrier Balkanique*, was started but a few days ago; being edited by two representatives belonging to the governmental party, its special object is to influence the Government. The credits granted us by the Ministry allow us to subsidize two pro-Russian organs, the *Zaria* and the *Tribune Balkanique*. Besides we have organized a bureau for Russian correspondents residing in Sofia; under Consul Bogoiavlensky's direction, they write articles for various Bulgarian periodicals, reproduce in them extracts from Russian newspapers, and thus help in describing the events in a light favourable to us. Owing to such persistent and intensive work we have succeeded in reuniting the opposition, in bringing together different people, as professors, physicians, lawyers, retired officers and civilians, all of them persons of standing and influence in the country. They publish appeals to the people, urge them to struggle against the German policy, etc. The funds we dispose of to that end are running short just at the moment when the struggle becomes intense and promises to become still more so. It would be very detrimental to our interests to allow the entire machinery, now in full swing, to come to a standstill. Far from that, its work should be intensified, in order to help us out of a difficult situation. I beg Your Excellency to devise some means to obtain new credits for us. Mr. Bark, Minister of Finance, who passed yesterday in Sofia, asked me to tell you that he entirely supports my point of view and that he will assure the necessary funds."

I have already mentioned my endeavours to bring about an understanding between the different opposition parties. The first step in that direction was the joint conversation of the opposition leaders with the Premier, after which there appeared their appeal to the nation. The next step was the famous audience that the five opposition leaders requested from the King and which was granted them on September 4 (17).

The King received them at his palace in Sofia in the presence of the Prince Royal and of the Court.

Gueshoff, Malinoff, and Daneff were the first to deliver their speeches; all three spoke unhesitatingly in favour of

a pro-Russian Policy, using the polished language they had acquired during their previous career. Then, turning to Sakysoff, the socialist leader, the King said ironically that he was not accustomed to see him often at the palace.

"The seriousness of the moment," replied Sakysoff, "urges all of us to think of the interests of our country and of its future. That is why I came here, hoping to be in time to prevent irreparable decisions."

Then came the turn of Stamboulisky, the leader of the "Agrarians." Inviting him to speak, the King inquired about the state of crops in his native province. Losing all self-control, Stamboulisky vehemently retorted that it was not time to talk about crops when the country was on the verge of being sold to Germany; he then threatened the King with every kind of horror if he persisted in his intention of leading the country against Russia. Pale with rage and grinding his teeth, the King answered: "Take care of your head!"—"Mine does not matter much," was the answer, "better take care of your own, which will roll about in the streets of Sofia if you dare pursue your nefarious policy!"

At that point the audience was abruptly cut short, and the King went straight to the Council of Ministers to complain to Radoslavoff of the way he was treated in his own palace. The rest is known: Stamboulisky was arrested, imprisoned, and remained in gaol for three years until the King's deposition.

About that time the work of the Germans had reached its culminating point. The Duke of Mecklenburg stopped at Sofia on his way back from Constantinople to Berlin; a few days later he came specially once more. During his stay King Ferdinand took him to the historically famous monastery of Rylo, the Bulgarian sanctuary and death-place of St. John, who after Saints Cyril and Methodius continued their work of propagating Christianity among the Bulgarians.

In the picturesque mountain region surrounding the monastery, situated at about one hundred and fifty kilo-

metres from the capital and quite close to the old Turkish frontier, the pupils of the Sofia Military School, who were going to become officers, were then engaged in manœuvres. The King had arranged for their promotion to take place during the Duke of Mecklenburg's visit. He reviewed them under the walls of the old convent, promoted them to officer's rank, and presented them to the Duke as future comrades in arms. The Duke also made a corresponding speech.

It all happened on a Sunday. By a stroke of chance I arrived at Rylo just after the King had left and met the Archimandrite Stephanus, now Metropolitan, a great friend of Russia, who related to me with tears in his eyes the details of all that had just happened. He added that having sighted him from afar the King motioned him to come nearer and, without holding out his hand, said :

" Well, the moment has arrived at last, when we can avenge and wash off all the insults inflicted upon us in the past years ! "

The Duke of Mecklenburg's activity was fully supported by the King. His *âme damnée*, Colonel Gantcheff, travelled twice to Berlin during that time, apparently with a view to settle the technical details of the military convention, or to conclude it.

The mobilization about to be ordered was a current subject of conversation and measures clearly indicating preparatives to war were decreed on September 5 and 6 (18 and 19). Dr. Vladoff, an influential member of the Macedonian Central Committee, of whom I have already spoken, came to see me at the Legation very late one night. Having been enlisted, he wore the reserve uniform and was very upset and nervous ; he told me of the measures taken by the Government and which established their intentions beyond any possible doubt. He once more entreated me to prevent the catastrophe and warned me that should his visit to me become known his life would be in danger.

I described all these alarming symptoms to Sazonoff in

a telegram sent that same night (No. 652), followed by another one on September 7 (20), (No. 657) :

" Probably acting under the impression of the insulting speeches of the opposition leaders, the King has thrown off his mask. He no longer tries to conceal his old game, neither his recent agreement with the Duke of Mecklenburg. He has personally issued, through the Chief of his Privy Council, mobilization orders to the railways and has decided to answer the last note of the Entente Powers by decreeing mobilization against Serbia. After the mobilization has been completed, it is probable Bulgaria will not attack Serbia before having been joined by the Germans, coming from the North. *However, the situation is critical.* The four Entente Ministers, after conferring together, have decided to lay before their respective Governments the following suggestions :

- " 1. To declare to the Bulgarian Government that an aggression against Serbia shall be regarded by the Powers as a *casus belli*.
- " 2. To occupy at once Macedonia with allied troops which could at the same time support the Serbians against Austria.
- " 3. To declare that, in case of an aggression, the ports of Burgas, Varna, and Dede-Agatch shall be immediately occupied.

" Our unanimous opinion is that such measures—swiftly and vigorously applied—are the only ones which could frustrate the King's insensate plans. Pending further instructions, we think it better not to question Radoslavoff about the mobilization, as his habitual mendacity would lead him to explain it as a precautionary measure, or invent some other falsehood. Rumours reach us that the Serbians would prefer to attack the Bulgarians while the latter's mobilization has not yet been completed. Although sharing that opinion, we still act in conformity with earlier instructions,¹ and having invited the Serbian Minister in Sofia to our conference, we requested him to dissuade Nish from any plans of aggression. We request precise instruc-

¹ According to these instructions, if the initiative of an aggression came from Serbia, she could no longer count upon the assistance of Roumania, nor even of Greece. The subsequent behaviour of Greece brilliantly proved how false and illusory that calculation had been.

tions as to both points. The King and his Government being, as well as the Turks, entirely subservient to Germany, it is likely that, in case of hostilities arising between Bulgaria and Serbia, the Germans will insist upon our recall."

In another telegram sent the same day (No. 658), I stated: ". . . the one thing we should not do in any case is to surrender easily our position to the Germans." I also suggested a corresponding line of action. Next day I developed the same idea (No. 659):

"The traditional character of our relations with Bulgaria, while giving us special rights, also implies some duties on our side. Neither of the two peoples, Bulgarian and Russian, will be able to understand how a rupture between the great Liberator and her younger sister could ever have been brought about by the German sympathies of the Bulgarian Government. Even Radoslavoff himself, that blind tool in the hands of the King, realized this when he assured me, but last autumn, that Bulgaria could do nothing without our consent. *Such a state of things imparts to the Russian representative in the country, more than to anyone else, the imperious moral duty, not to neglect any possible means that might prevent a rupture.* If the occupation of the Bulgarian ports were decided on principle, it could be used as a plea to address to the Bulgarian nation a special appeal from Russia.

"Such an appeal, if inspired by the ideas expressed in my telegram of February 25 (No. 121) and worded in pathetic terms and stating the advantages Bulgaria would reap by remaining true to Russia, could yet help the unfortunate nation and definitely destroy in its eyes the credit of its unworthy rulers. The public opinion is shocked by what has been going on lately and I have good reasons to believe that an appeal like the one I suggest would fall upon a fertile soil."

On September 7 (20) Radoslavoff called together the members of the Chamber belonging to his party and declared that the Government had resolved to proclaim a state of "armed neutrality." He also instructed the Bulgarian representatives in the Entente countries to announce that decision to the respective Governments, assuring them at

the same time that the decision bore no aggressive character whatever and merely amounted to a precautionary measure to meet any emergency. That same tale he repeated to me, when I came to have it explained. He said : " All of our neighbours are mobilizing and under arms, while we run the risk of being attacked at any moment ; we simply had to take some protective measures. Do not fear, this is not war ; it is nothing else but a *neutralité armée*." He smiled in a cunning way when pronouncing these two French words with a Bulgarian accent.

Nevertheless, the true meaning of that *neutralité armée* did not escape me, and when reporting the conversation to the Minister (No. 660) I did not hide from him the anxiety it inspired me. Next day, September 8 (21), I wired to Sazonoff (No. 663) that twelve guns of very heavy calibre had been transported to Varna and four to Burgas, and that the Bulgarian cavalry had been sent to the Serbian frontier to cover the Bulgarian mobilization.

When sending to the Minister for Foreign Affairs my telegram of September 7 (20), (No. 657), I had forwarded a copy to my colleague at Nish. Prince Troubetzkoy thought the measures suggested by me were quite opportune and supported them before the Imperial Government in his telegrams Nos. 832 and 833, copies of which he sent to me. On his own part he added that " the events necessitated most prompt decisions."

But Sazonoff had a different view of the question. He wired me on September 9 (22), (No. 4672), that " among the measures suggested for the event of a Bulgarian aggression against the Serbians, he only considered one as acceptable, namely the blockade of the *Ægean* sea ports."

I replied on the 10th (23rd), (No. 672, with copies to Paris, London, and Rome), that " in order to prevent further developments, prompt and decisive measures are necessary. From your telegram No. 4672, just received, I regret to see that you only consider as feasible the blockade of the *Ægean* ports. Now, on that coast Bulgaria possesses but one single port, namely Dede-Agatch, and that one is

actually being blockaded since a long time ; Lagos has no port. Consequently such a measure would hardly produce an impression. Something more efficacious ought to be devised."

As it will be remembered, from the outset of the war and at the risk of passing for a pro-Bulgarian, I had been an avowed partisan of extensive territorial concessions to be granted to Bulgaria in Macedonia. I had also constantly been meeting with obstacles. At times it was the Government who could not be persuaded, then it was the British who would not bring a pressure to bear upon heroic little Serbia, straining every nerve in her struggle with the enemy. But the greatest hindrance of all came from Serbia herself. The more reasonable among the Serbians—my Sofia colleague for one—owned that my arguments were correct, and only asked but one thing : that the necessary measures be applied as quickly and as painlessly as possible and without consulting the Serbians, who would prefer to submit to an accomplished fact. But the others were irreconcilable, especially Pashitch, the President of the Council. In the summer of 1915 I had specially travelled to Nish in the hope of convincing him by my argumentation, which was summary and amounted to this : Serbia had no right to doubt of Russia's feelings towards her ; Russia had gone to war for the Serbian cause ; it was only thanks to Russia that Serbia had been able to withstand the first shock ; it was Russia, again, who was supporting her all the time and in every way, supplying her with funds, arms, munitions, clothes, etc. After war Russia should like to see her become a great Serbia, including all the Yugo-Slavic elements, possessing a free access to the Adriatic, prosperous and flourishing. Such a brilliant future could only be guaranteed to Serbia by Russia in case the war should be won. In order to win the war all available forces must be concentrated and Bulgaria's co-operation represented among them a highly important factor. Bulgaria's co-operation could only be bought at the price of territorial concessions in Macedonia ; therefore Serbia was now called upon to consent to them, as well for her own sake as for that of Russia.

After two hours of such talk I did convince Pashitch, but only half-way: he was willing to concede Macedonia up to the Vardar line, but he would not hear of parting with a single inch of territory beyond that river.

I knew very well that this would never satisfy the Bulgarians, whereas Pashitch contended that Serbian public opinion would never tolerate more extensive concessions, and he threatened to resign should we try to enforce our scheme. I was convinced, however, that nothing short of the concession of Macedonia could overcome Bulgaria's obstinacy. I made a last effort on September 9 (22), (No. 669), and telegraphed:

"Since Troubetzkoy considers it quite impossible to obtain Serbia's consent to the occupation of Macedonia by Bulgaria, *the only solution would be to occupy it with Allied troops, or simply to send such troops to the assistance of Serbia.* Such an action would produce a strong impression in the Balkans; it would make us the masters of the occupied territory and allow us to act there according to circumstances. To give Bulgaria a proof of our sincerity, we could, for instance, propose her to appoint, under our control, Bulgarian officials and administrators to certain parts of Macedonia, or even to attach Bulgarian contingents to the Allied forces there. Such measures would obviate every danger of a Serbo-Bulgarian conflict, since there would exist an international buffer on the Vardar. Should the Imperial Government decide to take up a vigorous policy, the occupation of the Bulgarian ports could be explained by the necessity of assisting our Allies as a consequence of formerly contracted obligations. Personally, I am convinced that given the unpopularity of the King's policy, rapid and vigorous measures on our part have still some chances of success."

It will be easy to imagine the state of nervous suspense we were in during the last days before the rupture. The days counted double and treble. . . .

And yet although every one of us was conscious of having said and done all he could to present the situation in its true light and of having exhausted all the suggestions that could have helped to prevent the irreparable from happen-

ing, meantime I still thought it to be my duty to telegraph again to Sazonoff on September 9 (12), (No. 670) :

"The King and the Government being hypnotized by the Germans, there are no other means to prevent the impending events, but to send at once reinforcements to Serbia, to block the ports and to call forth some activity on the part of Roumania and Greece."

Nevertheless my heart was heavy, and I felt that the Bulgaro-Serbian conflict was inevitable ; for that reason I added to the above telegram a question as to how the Imperial Government would consider from the standpoint of our relations with Bulgaria the following three eventualities:

1. If the Bulgarians were the first to attack,
2. If the aggression came from the Serbians, and
3. If the Bulgarians crossed the Serbian frontier only after the Austro-German advance had been completed.

On September 10 (23) the situation looked so desperate that, when reporting it to Sazonoff (No. 673), I begged for instructions in case of our departure ; at the same time I sent a circular to all our consuls, warning them to be ready for an emergency. I still sent the same day another telegram to the Minister (No. 678) :

"I am urging with all my might the opposition to act vigorously and to play upon the unpopularity of the mobilization. I have so far succeeded in persuading Gueshoff and Malinoff to arrive at an understanding with Ghennadieff. Malinoff hopes to see the King. I entertained a faint hope that an interview of the 'Narodniak' and 'Democrat' leaders with the influential and cunning chief of the Macedonians might prevent the impending catastrophe."

As to Radoslavoff, he avoided seeing the representatives of the Entente Powers. After insisting for a long time I finished by seeing him on September 11 (24). The results of that interview were described to the Minister as follows (No. 688) :

". . . Having referred to the fact that the Bulgarian Government, hypnotized by Berlin, had answered

our last note by issuing mobilization orders, I said: 'The Germans in their falsehood are preparing for Bulgaria a state of unheard-of servitude. The Turkish delegate has refused to appose his signature to the protocol of Dimotika. Nothing is heard of the promised advance of the Austro-German forces against Serbia. Greece has already mobilized, while Roumania is probably going to do the same very soon. The Allies have decided to send one hundred and fifty thousand men to Macedonia. Bulgaria lacks rifles and munitions; her mobilization has caused throughout the country a general feeling of distress. No one wants that war, not even the partisans of the Government and of the Court; hence the constant necessity of recurring to menaces and even to terror. The nation has been misled and shall never pardon the Government for having drawn her towards a cataclysm. Russia, also, shall never forgive the misdeed that is being committed; nevertheless, she clearly distinguishes between the Bulgarian nation and her rulers. If things go as far as a rupture, the responsibility shall rest with latter. *However, everything is not lost yet.* If the Government check themselves, cancel the mobilization, refrain from any attack against the Serbians, and direct their forces against the common foe, then Macedonia, that same Macedonia the Allies are presently going to occupy, may belong to Bulgaria.' Visibly affected by my words, Radoslavoff began to deny the German influence, assured me that the mobilization was nothing more than an 'armed neutrality' and was only calculated to put Bulgaria on the same footing with her neighbours, and so on. Besides, the same day when the mobilization had been ordered, he had instructed the Bulgarian representatives in Petrograd, Paris, and London to explain it to the Governments to which they were accredited. After having told me all these platitudes and lies, he got excited and cried: 'Macedonia must be Bulgarian and shall be! If one does not want to give them to her, Bulgaria shall obtain by her own means both Macedonian zones.'

"Proceeding further with his lies he said he was preparing a reply to our last note. When I asked him how he was going to reconcile our demands with his arrangement with Turkey, he retorted that a war against Turkey would be unpopular. I then reminded him of his own words, namely that having obtained the Maritza line Bulgaria would be

nearer to Tchataldja ; he replied that ' it would not be fair to attack Turkey directly after having concluded an arrangement with her. ' "

Worried as I was by the desire to prevent the catastrophe, a new idea occurred to me which I suggested to Sazonoff (September 12 (25), No. 693) :

" Since the Serbian Government persist in their decision not to cede Macedonia to the Bulgarians, could they not offer it as a deposit, not even to the Powers, but *personally to His Majesty the Emperor* ? Such an act, while having its historical precedents, could in no way be derogatory to the *amour-propre* of Serbia and would be in conformity with the words of the Regent who, after the Austrian ultimatum, had implored our Sovereign to support Serbia, *putting her fate entirely into the hands of the Emperor*. While proving the sincerity of the Serbians and their confidence in Russia, the suggested deed would also represent in our hands a guarantee we could dispose of later according to circumstances. Put into that form, Serbia's action could not be construed either as a success for Radoslavoff's policy, nor as a sign of our own weakness."

Meanwhile Malinoff came to tell me that the Court and the Ministry were making advances to him, trying to induce him to enter the present Cabinet. It was an attempt to shift upon the opposition parties a part of the responsibility for the King's nefarious policy. The leader of the opposition was firmly determined not to yield to that scheme and to tell so straightforwardly to the King, whom he was to see the next day. In view of that audience he asked me to enlighten him upon the situation and especially to tell him what stage our negotiations with the Radoslavoff Government had reached ? Realizing the great seriousness of the moment, I resolved to be quite frank with him and explained to him the state of things in great detail, hoping that it might be of service to him in his conversation with the King. I reported that interview to Sazonoff on September 13 (26), (No. 695) :

" After an exchange of views with Malinoff, I told him

approximately the following: 'Notwithstanding the fact that the Bulgarian Government answered to the Entente's proposals of September 1 by a decree of mobilization, the Powers still maintain all their offers. However, seeing the hostility of the King and of the Government, they have already taken certain measures; they have induced Greece to mobilize, they hope to obtain the same from Roumania, and they have decided to send troops to Macedonia. At present the sending of these troops has no character of hostility towards Bulgaria, being only calculated to assist the Serbians as well as to serve the interests of the Powers. Should Bulgaria change her policy, the Entente Powers shall keep their promise and restore Macedonia to her. Malinoff then asked me if broader concessions could be expected from us. To that I replied that at this moment *the essential point was to prevent Bulgaria from taking an irremediable step* and to begin negotiations during which one might possibly work out some mode of action allowing Bulgaria in one way or another to take part in the occupation of Macedonia.' "

The King received Malinoff at the Varna Palace on September 14 (27). He came to me straight from the palace to tell me the details of the conversation he considered to have ended in complete failure. According to him, the King had resorted to cheap amiability in trying to induce him to enter Radoslavoff's Cabinet, in order to win his support to the Government's criminal policy. Malinoff declined straight. The King kept him to dinner and, while accompanying him to his car, significantly said *au revoir* and bade him once more to think over all that had been said. Obviously, when inviting Malinoff, the King's decision had already been taken; he did not at all want to know his visitor's views, nor still less to follow them. He simply thought that Malinoff could not resist the temptation and should succumb to his cajoleries. To his honour, Malinoff resisted.

The events of the week that followed upon that audience developed in the only way that could be expected. At four o'clock in the afternoon of September 21 (October 4) I



sent to Radoslavoff our ultimatum, giving him twenty-four hours for the reply.

Here is the text of that document which had been transmitted to me in cipher from Petrograd :

" Acting by order of my Government, I, the Imperial Minister of Russia, have the honour to bring to the knowledge of His Excellency the President of the Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs the following :

" The events which take place at present in Bulgaria point to a definite decision of the Government of King Ferdinand to place the fate of the country into the hands of Germany. The presence of German and Austrian officers in the Ministry of War and in the Army Staffs, the concentration of the troops in localities contiguous to Serbia, the extensive financial aid accepted by the Sofia Government from our enemies, leave no doubt as to against whom the present military preparations of the Bulgarian Government are directed.

" The Powers of the Entente, having very near at heart the protection of the national aspirations of the Bulgarian nation, have repeatedly warned M. Radoslavoff that every hostile action against Serbia should be looked upon as one directed against themselves. The facts have contradicted the assurances freely given by the Head of the Government in response to these warnings. The representative of Russia, which is tied to Bulgaria by the ineffaceable memory of her delivery from the Turkish yoke, cannot remain in a country that is preparing a fratricidal aggression against an allied Slavic nation. The Imperial Minister has received the order to leave Bulgaria, together with all the Staff of the Legation and the Consulates, if in twenty-four hours' time the Bulgarian Government does not openly break with the enemies of Slavism and of Russia and does not take measures to remove immediately from the army the officers belonging to the Powers that are at war with the Entente."

The twenty-four hours had not quite passed, when on September 22 (October 4), at 2.40 p.m., I received the Bulgarian reply worded as follows :

" In reply to the ultimatum of the Imperial Government remitted yesterday, September 21 (October 4), at 4 p.m., to

the President of the Council, the Royal Government of Bulgaria has the honour to declare loudly as follows :

"The destiny of Bulgaria has always been jealously watched by the Bulgarian nation and directed by responsible Governments.

"The Royal Government protest with all their might against the accusation of having delivered the destiny of the country into the hands of the Germans.

"The Royal Government of Bulgaria categorically deny the presence of German and Austrian officers in the offices of the Ministry of War in Sofia as well as in the staffs of different military units, while being convinced, on the other hand, that an incidental appointment of foreign officers to service in the Royal army could in no case be considered as an act of hostility towards anyone, neither as a fact proper to impugn the neutrality or the sovereign rights of the Kingdom.

"After the explanations that have already been given upon the mobilization of the Bulgarian Army, it would not only be arbitrary, but even unjust, to draw a conclusion as the one contained in the above-mentioned ultimatum, from the single fact that in order to meet their foreign liabilities, namely to the Imperial Government—and at a moment very difficult for the country—the Bulgarian Government has recurred, at onerous conditions, to the credit of private banks even if German ones ; and it would be still more arbitrary to do so, since any Government in the least degree concerned with the renown of its country should be bound to act in the same way under similar conditions.

"By threatening to leave the country if within twenty-four hours the Bulgarian Government does not openly break their relations with the Powers inimical to Russia, the Minister of His Imperial Majesty invites Bulgaria to abandon the neutrality the value of which to Russia's allies, as well as to Russia herself, is however indubitable.

"It is certain that by following the line of conduct hitherto adopted Bulgaria is unable to alter the decision arrived at by the Imperial Government. She can but regret sincerely and broken-heartedly that the efforts hitherto applied by the Bulgarian nation and government to arrive at a close union with Russia should crumble against her will, owing to actions she has certainly not contributed to."

Indignant at this very acme of mendacity and hypocrisy, I conformed myself to the ministerial instructions and immediately informed the Government of the rupture of relations, asking for the return of my credentials.

Since a long time already the dishonesty of King Ferdinand's Government had been in need of no proof; but it became still more flagrant after the appearance of the Bulgarian publication: "*Documents diplomatiques se rapportant à l'entrée de la Bulgarie dans la Guerre Européenne.*" Annexed to it were the texts of the following documents:

1. The military convention between Germany, Austria, and Bulgaria.
2. The treaty of amity and alliance between Bulgaria and the German Empire.
3. The secret convention between Bulgaria and Germany.

All three documents, fully pledging Bulgaria to an immediate and active alliance with the Central Empires, had been signed upon the same day—August 24 (September 6), 1915. For almost one month after they had been signed, the Bulgarian Government continued to pretend being interested in the Entente's proposals to Bulgaria. Upon the day when he answered the ultimatum, Radoslavoff sent to the four representatives in Sofia a long note, antedated September 21 (October 4), containing, among others, such passages:

"The Government of His Majesty the King of the Bulgarians have made it their duty to examine most seriously and conscientiously the declarations and offers the representatives of the High Powers deigned to lay before them. . . . With due reverence to the benevolence that the High Allied Powers have never ceased to display towards them during the actual crisis, the Royal Government seize the present occasion to renew the acknowledgment of their deep gratitude for the care. . . . They have no doubt that the Great Powers will recognize them as having the legitimate and indisputable right, etc. . . . In the desire to direct the destiny of the Bulgarian nation with full information in hand, the Royal Government deem it their duty to request

supplementary data to be furnished to them concerning the following points . . . in order to be able to call once more the nation to a new trial, doubtless of the most severe kind. . . . In the present circumstances, clear and positive assurances would be the only efficacious means of persuading the Bulgarian Government to take a definite resolution. . . . The Royal Government realize that the decision they are invited to take puts at stake the very existence of this country. This is why they think it their duty to take all the necessary and sufficient precautions in order to protect the vital interests entrusted to them and the legitimate guardian of which they represent. This is also why they are firmly resolved not to abandon the attitude they assumed in the beginning of the World War while attending to the primordial interests of the nation in expectation of the assurances they hope the High Allied Powers will not deny them. . . ."

My French and British colleagues presented their ultimatum to the Bulgarian Government upon the same day when I did.

On September 24 (October 7) the Staff of the Legation left Sofia, whereas I was laid up by a violent attack of appendicitis that kept me in bed for over a month.

The day before leaving Sofia, O'Beirne came to take leave. While that old friend of mine was sitting by my bedside, I was sure of being much nearer to death than he was; however, fate had decided differently and a few months later he met with a terrible end on board the *Hampshire* when accompanying Lord Kitchener to Russia. It will be remembered that the *Hampshire* was sunk by the Germans off the Orkney Islands on July 5, 1916, soon after leaving the far-away port in Scotland whence she had sailed with the purpose of avoiding the danger threatening along the nearer sea routes.

Quite recently a common friend of ours in London related to me some interesting details I did not know. It appears that O'Beirne's manservant, whom I had known for years, had a presentiment of the catastrophe and tried everything to dissuade his master from that voyage; having

failed, he finished by making him miss the train that was going to take Lord Kitchener and O'Beirne to the steamer. But O'Beirne ordered a special train and was in time for the boat ! The Germans knew well what big game they were after ; but I wonder which of the two passengers was the most disagreeable and dangerous for them ?

O'Beirne had spent several years at his Petrograd post ; he had left many friends there, and at the moment of our rupture with Bulgaria he had a great desire to let his staff travel via Salonika, while he would go back to England through Russia. He asked my friendly advice in that matter. I replied that if I were in his place I would not leave my colleagues at such a moment and should have gone straight to London, where he might be wanted, whereas he could always ask later to be sent to Russia. " After all, it is just the way I am feeling," was O'Beirne's reply.

During our last interview in Sofia he told me of his surprise at having been invited that same afternoon to come to the palace. He had been still more surprised when King Ferdinand found nothing better to say at parting, than to express the hope that the war would not affect his good personal relations with King George !

Mr. de Panafieu, my French colleague, with whom I had collaborated longer than with O'Beirne and whose clever and enlightened co-operation I keep in most friendly and grateful memory, had also been called in by the King before his departure. During the conversation the King told him of his regret that poor France should have taken such a perilous road. Mr. de Panafieu indignantly rejected such " condolence " and said he was sure that France would come out victorious from the struggle.

All my household was leaving together with the Legation Staff except my faithful servant, Pacini, who remained with his family to look after me. The big house of the Legation, so full and animated but a few days ago, had now become silent and grim. Tied to my bed, I felt lonely and forsaken in a country once so near and now, suddenly, inimical.

The three doctors who treated me came daily, often twice a day. When they arrived the day after the Legation Staff had left, I said to them jokingly that I was now a hostage lying at their mercy. Missing the joke, these good fellows seriously assured me that now, more than ever, they felt it their duty to put me on my feet again. I still feel very grateful to them for all they did to cure me.

My position was now a very delicate one, obliged as I was to stay, against my will and in spite of the war, in a country where I had held an important official post. The situation demanded the greatest prudence and circumspection, in order not to be accused of violating the hospitality accorded me. I, therefore, declined to see during the whole of my illness the numerous Bulgarian friends who asked to see me; I limited myself to talks with the physicians who, like many of their profession in most countries, were very keen on political questions, as well as with the neutral diplomats among whom the *Chargé d'Affaires* of the Netherlands had kindly taken charge of our interests.

Through these visitors I learned of the difficulties the mobilization had met with, of the sullen and lugubrious way it was proceeding, and how different it was from the call to arms in 1912, when every Bulgarian picked up his rifle with joy and merriment. Now, entire regiments mutineered upon learning they were led against the Russians; they had to be accompanied by special detachments and conveyed in cars with whitewashed windows so that the soldiers should not know whither they were being transported.

The Germans and the Austrians were feeling the masters of the situation. Their superior officers behaved as in a conquered country and aroused everywhere the most bitter feelings. One of the Bulgarian Generals refused to speak German to an Austrian Colonel who brought orders for his division, and asked him to leave; the King immediately relieved him of his command and nearly court-martialled him.

The Bulgarians' spirits sank still lower after the bombard-

ment by the Allied fleets of the ports of Varna and Dede-Agatch ; still more yet after the first encounter with the Serbians near Pirot, where their army suffered heavy losses and was not supported by the Germans as it had been agreed.

As a matter of fact, while they were trying to persuade Bulgaria to go to war, the Germans made lavish promises of every kind ; they said that a special Austro-German army would be sent in order to deliver the decisive blow to the Serbians, that the latter would be crushed without Bulgaria even having to recur to arms, after which Macedonia would fall down like a ripe fruit for her to pick up. In return for all that the Germans only asked to be allowed to cross the Bulgarian frontier. But as soon as the die was cast and the Bulgarians had taken the field, they found no German army to support them and had to withstand alone the first impact, which was terrible.

Their losses in dead and wounded were terrific ; the whole country was depressed and disheartened ; there was not one family that was not in deep mourning. One dared not transport the wounded in daytime, and it was by night, during the interminable hours I spent on my sick-bed, that I listened to the uninterrupted clatter of carts filled with wounded which passed along the streets. The hospitals in Sofia were overflowing and their access was forbidden even to parents and near relatives, in order to prevent the wounded soldiers from telling what had happened at the front.

It is under such omens that the nefarious war was beginning, a war no one wanted and which the whole country had up to the last moment hoped to avoid.

My convalescence was progressing satisfactorily, but, it seemed to me, too slowly. The King's aide-de-camp, those of the Queen and of the Prince Royal came almost every day to the Legation to inquire about my health. Radoslavoff also came to my door, and even the German Minister, the colourless Mr. Michaelis.

As soon as the doctors allowed me to go, I wrote to Rado-

slavoff to remind him that at the Legation departure he had promised Mr. Sabler, our First Secretary, to protect my journey up to the frontier of the Kingdom. Radoslavoff replied that he would instruct the "Chef du Protocole" to take charge of that matter, and a few hours later I was informed that a private car would be added to the regular train. Some time afterwards, another letter from Mr. Miltcheff arrived, telling me that by special order of the King a royal car would be put at my disposal. My surprise went growing when, next morning, I received, one after the other, two letters; one was from the Chief of the Privy Cabinet, informing me that a special train was waiting for me, the other was from the King himself.

I am sorry not to have kept a copy of that letter, the original having been remitted to Sazonoff upon my return to Petrograd, where it was to be kept in the archives of the Ministry. The King wrote that in order to make me travel comfortably he had ordered to prepare his own train, the same that the Grand Duke Vladimir and the Grand Duchess had used when they came to Bulgaria for the inauguration of the monument to the Czar-Deliverer. The King described the train, which was to consist of a drawing-room car, a dining car, one for my "suite," and a luggage van. He added that his aide-de-camp, General Markoff, would be attached to me on the journey and was instructed to attend to everything and to accompany me to the frontier. The King also suggested that when I arrived at Rustchuk I spend the night in the train, waiting for the moment when the boat would take me across the Danube.

Everything had been foreseen, down to the last detail!

My first movement was to decline that courtesy, so ill in keeping with the attitude the King had assumed towards my country. On second thought, though very reluctantly, I accepted.

The day before my departure, rather late in the afternoon, as I was sitting and talking in the small study with my excellent Dr. Sarafoff who had come to take leave of me, a *kavass* entered and announced the King!

The phrase had been said in Bulgarian, and I was far from expecting a visit of that kind. I was so astonished that I bid the *kavass* repeat what he had said. He said that the King was there; that, without saying anything downstairs, he had ascended to the second floor, to my private apartments, and that he was now in the small red drawing-room, one room distant from the one we were then occupying.

I was rather taken aback and at first thought I intended to excuse myself, pretexting the doctors' orders. At the same instant another thought flashed through my brain: if, after his amiable letter and all the kindness he had shown me regarding my journey, the King was coming to me in person, it certainly meant that he had something serious to tell me. Though I was no longer filling an official post, or, perhaps, just because of that, I felt that I had no right to eschew the conversation, however painful it might prove to be. Who knows, I thought, maybe the King has realized during the last month that he had made a mistake; having been fooled by the Germans and defeated by the Serbians, he perhaps wants to take hold of the opportunity and of my being divested of any official quality in order to entrust me with some overtures to be made before the Emperor, or the Imperial Government? Sudden changes of that sort were frequently occurring in the East and the King readily adopted such methods!

All these thoughts went through my head as quick as lightning and, I repeat it, I felt I had no right to shun the conversation, especially since my French and British colleagues had not only conversed with the King after war had been declared, but had even answered his invitation and had gone to see him at the palace. So I gave an order to the *kavass* and, a few seconds later, I entered the small sitting-room where the King was waiting, his aide-de-camp, Stoyanoff, standing a little apart.

My visitor, generally so full of self-assurance, weighing every word and every gesture, even every look, was now visibly disconcerted! He said that while making up his

mind to come and see me, he had often wondered whether it would not disturb me, and so on. After that preamble he looked around for a seat. Leaving the aide-de-camp in the sitting-room, I led the King to my large study.

The door having been closed upon us, he sank in a sofa and began to speak.

His speech had obviously been carefully prepared and thought out in the silence of the sleepless nights the King was said to be suffering from. He had probably promised to himself not to let me go without first pouring out to me all that had accumulated in his heart in the way of vindictiveness, bitterness, acrimony, and hate. . . . I also think that much of what he said was aimed over my head and meant for others. Upon my return to Petrograd, Grand Duke Nicholas Mikhailovitch told me he thought the King's action had been calculated to cast a shadow personally upon me before the public opinion in Russia.

This is approximately what I heard :

" If you only knew, my dear friend, how often I have thought of you during the last two years ! How often, when passing before your windows, I have pitied you from all my heart ; you, a man of taste, spoiled by life, to be forced to live in this half-savage country, to be obliged to talk to uncultured people, to have to do with men below your station ! Terrible things have happened, things that our eyes ought never to have seen ! And do you want me to tell you why ? Because in Russia one has never wanted to understand us, one has always wanted to put us in one heap with the Serbians. But you who now know well the Bulgarians, you must acknowledge that in spite of all their drawbacks they also have great qualities. They are straightforward, honest people, people with whom one can deal, whereas the Serbians, they are nothing but blackguards, swindlers ! And you, in Russia, you thought nothing was too good for them ! "

Until then I had been silently listening to the King, but at that moment I interrupted him :

" What an injustice ! " I exclaimed. " If anybody, it is

certainly the Serbians who have a right to blame Russia for not having treated them as well as the others. The Serbians have often complained of it and, sometimes, not without reason. Whereas the Bulgarians have always been the spoiled children, too much spoiled; this is perhaps where the explanation of the present calamity should be looked for!"

The King let me speak without answering, then he went on :

" Yes, in Russia you only have made much of the Serbians ! But when I arrived in St. Petersburg in 1910 as an ardent neophyte, with the idea of laying Bulgaria at the feet of the Emperor, requesting His Majesty to consecrate by his presence the inauguration of the temple affectionately erected by the Bulgarians as a token of gratitude to Russia, what sort of reception did I meet with ? I was turned a cold shoulder on ; Sazonoff would not even listen to me ; they cut me, insulted me. . . . "

At that point I once more interrupted the King to deny the coldness of the reception that was made to him. Being at the time the Chief of Cabinet of the Minister, I happened to know all the details ; besides, I wanted to correct an error, for it was not Sazonoff, but Isvolsky, who was Minister at that time.

" Yes," retorted the King, " but Sazonoff was then the " *Tovaristch*."

He used the Russian term meaning the assistant minister.

When I related this conversation in St. Petersburg to Sazonoff, he exclaimed : " My God, but what coldness could I have shown ? I never had so much as an opportunity to speak to the King. At the big gala dinner at Tsarskoe I only asked to be introduced to him, as I had never met him before."

In spite of my observations, the King continued :

" And now it is me they hate in Russia ; yes, they do hate me. I have been deprived of my regiment, of my Honorary Colonel's uniform, they have struck me off the lists of the Order of St. Andrew. . . . "

To these complaints I could only answer with a shrug !

" Well, they have arrived at what they wanted to ! It is I who have destroyed with my own hands the bridge that connected the two countries, but it is still I who can rebuild it ! "

I felt that this phrase had a double meaning ; it was, perhaps, a threat to the Austro-Germans, if their support was not effective enough, or Bulgaria's gains from the war was not large enough ; it was, perhaps, an advance made to Russia, hinting at the possibility of an eventual renewal of relations. It was also quite possible that the phrase was calculated to cover both ends !

The King remained silent for a moment and looked as if he had said all he wanted to. He then broached the subject of the horrors of the war, of Italy who had just joined in it. He raised his eyes and cried : " Blood, blood everywhere ! Blood over there, too, in Italy ! . . . "

Then I broke the silence, saying that I, too, begged to be heard. The King folded his arms and said, in a resigned tone : " I am listening. "

In short sentences I then described his attitude towards Russia, beginning from the moment when, disregarding the Emperor's advice, he ordered, in 1913, the attack against the Serbians. After the disaster that had followed, he had called to power the men who had advised him to turn away from Russia in favour of Austria ; he had maintained them in power up to the last and, taking advantage of their unscrupulousness, he had made them the obedient tools of his Germanophile policy ; and had finished by dragging his people into a monstrous war, unnecessary and promising no good, either to his people or to himself. . . .

While I was speaking the King made impatient gestures, as if he wanted to interrupt me. At last he found a moment and said :

" There is a question I want to ask you. What have you done with my big portrait in oils I gave you ? If you intend taking it with you to Russia, I shall ask you not to,

because in their hatred they will rip it to pieces, trample upon it. . . ."

I allayed his fears. The portrait was to remain in Bulgaria, with all my things.

After that he got up, apologizing for having tired me out with his visit. When passing along the reception-rooms he paused to admire the beautiful portrait of the Czar-Liberator I had ordered for the large ballroom of the Legation; although the apartments were already in disorder, the King complimented me upon the changes and improvements I had introduced into the inner arrangements of the Legation.

"I shall personally look after everything during your absence," said he, "and when you come back you will find everything in place. In spite of the terrible conditions in which we are parting, I want to assure you of my personal feelings towards you; if at any time I can be helpful to you, I shall be happy." Upon which he gripped my hand.

Extraordinary, almost incredible visit! A visit much commented upon and just as complex in itself as the entire personality of King Ferdinand!

Next day one of the King's own motor-cars came to take me to the railway station, where the Court dignitaries, representatives of the Government and of the "Protocole" were assembled. General Markoff took his place with me in the train that was to take me to Rustchuk.

At three o'clock in the afternoon we passed the station of Plevna. My heart was sinking as I thought of the Russo-Bulgarian recollections attached to that locality and of the terrible sacrifices Russia had made to liberate the nation now at war with her!

Next morning the boat took me across the Danube, and I landed at Giurgevo, where a Roumanian special train was waiting for me. About lunch-time I had reached Bucharest.

I stopped at the Russian Legation, where my friend Poklevsky offered me his hospitality, and I stayed there some ten days. The Bulgarian physicians had insisted upon a period of rest for fear of the fatigue of a prolonged journey.

Poklevsky was in close touch with his French and British

colleagues, who came daily to lunch with him, in order to talk things over and to combine their actions ; the Minister of Italy often joined them. I assisted at their conversations and was once more *au courant* of the political situation.

At Bucharest I found waiting for me a telegram from Sazonoff. He wanted to know whether the newspapers' account of King Ferdinand's alleged visit to me was correct, and if that was the case, requesting me to tell him what the King could have said to me. I took the opportunity to inform him not only of my conversation with the King, but also of my impressions as to the state of minds I had observed before leaving Sofia. Anxious for news concerning the famous visit, the Russian and foreign correspondents came in their turn to interview me.

My presence in Bucharest having become generally known, I thought it my duty to request an audience at the palace and also to visit Mr. Bratiano, the Minister for Foreign Affairs. I had the honour to know their Majesties since many years, when the King, then Prince Royal, had come to St. Petersburg, in 1908, with the Princess.

I was first received by the Queen in her nice palace of Cotroceni, which she was at that time arranging with her customary delicate taste. Gracious and charming as ever, she greeted me with the natural simplicity that constitutes one of her great charms : " I saw in the papers that you were in Bucharest and I thought : surely he will ask to see me."

After a few polite phrases the conversation turned upon politics. Clever, keen upon the affairs of State, enjoying great weight and consideration in the country, as well as adored by the people, the Queen talked to me for over an hour of the burning questions of the day. What interested her most was, of course, the entry of Roumania into the war on the side of the Entente Powers. The Queen's sympathies towards these Powers are well known, as well as the ties of relationship, education, culture, and tastes that dictate them. All of these rather personal feelings she devoted to the service of her country ; from a political

standpoint she could not conceive Roumania otherwise than forming part of the Entente.

"Believe me," she said, "the King would not have anything against joining the Allies at once; such a decision is anxiously expected by everybody, and the street and the masses would acclaim it with overwhelming joy; but it would be imprudent on our part, and even useless for the Allies, if we took that important step before the right psychological moment has arrived. Rest assured that we shall take it, only let us pick out the moment when we can join the battle with profit, as well for ourselves and for you."

When dismissing me the Queen said that the King would see me presently and that I should also do well to go and see Bratiano.

As a true constitutional Sovereign, the King, as far as possible, avoided talking politics. He adroitly evaded all my attempts to turn the conversation upon such matters, referred amiably to his journeys to Russia, talked of bear-hunt shooting in Roumania, and of other subjects having nothing to do with the actual situation. At the end of the audience he said that Bratiano would surely be much interested in having a conversation with me.

Next day I went to Bratiano and spent over an hour with him. After inquiring upon my latest Bulgarian impressions, the Minister proceeded to a detailed statement of his policy in regard to the Entente. He said he had gone too far with his pro-Entente sympathies to be able to go back upon them; as long as he stayed in power, and he thought it would be for a long time, Roumania could not do otherwise but gravitate towards the Entente. But for a small country like Roumania, whose army did not count more than seven hundred thousand bayonets, it would be very dangerous to throw herself blindly into the struggle of giants who were handling armies of several millions. Should Roumania go to war at the wrong moment, her army would be instantly annihilated without any profit for the Entente. That is why the Roumanian Government, though determined in

principle to support militarily the Entente Powers, was waiting for a convenient moment before taking up arms.

"You may tell Mr. Sazonoff so from me," added Mr. Bratiano, "but, of course, he knows very well my point of view."

Such was Bratiano's argumentation. In theory, he might have been right; but was he in practice, and did really Roumania choose for joining in the war a moment propitious to her and to the Allies?

This is an open question, and it is yet to be shown, whether it would not have been wiser for Roumania to have attacked the Austrians from the flank at the moment when the victorious Russian armies, having taken Lemberg and Przemyśl, were pouring down into the Hungarian plains?

Before leaving Bucharest I once more saw the Queen at a tea party she gave at the Cotroceni Palace. Surrounded by the Princesses, her daughters, one of whom since became the Queen of Serbia and the other one the Queen of Greece, she did the honours with the grace so characteristic of her. Under the impression of that charming and luminous vision, I left Roumania.

My heart was beating fast when the train was approaching the frontier station. To be once more in Russia, to see again my beautiful country to which I had devoted all my forces in trying to make easier for her the struggle with a terrible and cruel enemy! What sublime and entrancing emotions!

The first question I asked Sazonoff at our meeting was whether he disapproved of my Bulgarian policy and whether he found I could have done better and otherwise?

"No, my dear friend," he cried, "I have not a thing to reproach you of; I know you have done everything that was humanly possible. But it was hopeless to strive against King Ferdinand's ill-will. I know something about it myself."

Our rupture with Bulgaria naturally remained as unintelligible as ever to the Russian public opinion. Consequently,



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a series of statesmen, journalists, and other people came to see me in the hope of getting the key to the riddle that was worrying the public conscience. Discretion and discipline demanded an obstinate silence on my part, and I had to limit my explanations to the purely external side of the rupture. I felt certain that the public opinion, through its authorized channel, the Douma, would claim for an account to be rendered to whom it concerned. But time passed, and it was not before February, 1916, that the Minister for Foreign Affairs made a statement at the Tauride Palace, regretfully acknowledging, as I have already related, that our Balkanic policy had not been as satisfactory as it should have been expected.

The representatives were told nothing else, and no further explanations were given them. To my great surprise that statement satisfied them, and they did not insist upon any particulars. Mr. Miliukoff, member of the Douma, who professed to be at home in matters of foreign policy, especially Balkanic, did nothing but note the Minister's statement and went on with further diatribes.

The public opinion still remained in complete ignorance as to the tragedy that was worrying it.

Other much more important events came to pass since that time. A revolution, long since prepared by Germany and carried out by aliens, came to sweep like a hurricane all that had been stable and sacred in Russia. Unscrupulous and unpatriotic people, ignorant and futile, guided by petty ambitions and personal profit, played into the hands of our inexorable enemies and assisted in fostering the revolution while war was still at its full. Devoid of any kind of political sense, of any training or knowledge, ignorant of most elementary things, and blissfully soaring in empyreans, the men of the "Provisional Government" fancied that it was enough for them to seize power to be able to pilot into haven the vessel of state. Having taken into their hands a

state machinery at full working speed, they only succeeded in completely wrecking it in a few weeks' time.

Seeing the turn the events were taking, I left Petrograd about the end of April, 1917, and went to Kislovodsk in the Caucasus, where news reached me in October that the Bolsheviks had seized the power. I spent two years in the Caucasus, partly during the "Soviet" regime, partly under that of the Volunteer Army, whose Command entrusted me with a special mission to the British Head-quarters on the Caspian Sea, as well as to the newly formed political organisms in Transcaucasia.

After that I emigrated.

